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**‘that whyche ys nedefoulle and nesesary’:
The Nature and Purpose of the Original
Furnishings and Decoration of Hardwick Hall,
Derbyshire**

**Two Volumes
(Volume One)**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the History of Art

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Finally, I must thank my family, without whom there would be nothing.

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and that any assistance received has been duly acknowledged in the main text or footnotes.

The thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

No part of this work has appeared in print previously, although some material arising from my research and relating to the appliqué panels depicting classical heroines, which occurs here in Chapter Four, will be published shortly in a revised form as “‘Pictures of the Vertues’: A Set Of Wall-Hangings at Hardwick Hall’, *Renaissance Journal* (forthcoming, 2005). Some of the illustrations for this thesis have been taken from my earlier publication, *A Very Goodly Prospect* ([London]: The National Trust, 1997), which was a brief souvenir booklet written for a general audience and does not contain or reflect the research undertaken for this study.

ABSTRACT

This study considers the nature and purpose of the original furnishings and decoration of Hardwick Hall. It analyses surviving artefacts, inventories, accounts and other documentation, as well as other comparative contemporary literary and visual sources. It seeks to reveal more about Bess of Hardwick's motives and processes in creating the interior of Hardwick.

The Introduction includes a brief biography of Bess and a survey of existing literature on Hardwick. It also indicates the scope for new work.

Chapter Two provides a context for the later chapters by considering the organisation of space within the building and its social significance. In order to understand the relationship between the two Hardwick Halls a detailed analysis of the Old Hall's whole layout is offered for the first time.

Chapter Three analyses the furnishings as physical objects. It asks what Bess owned, how she acquired it, how she used it and how her practices compared with other peoples'. Discussion is based on the 1601 inventory, Bess's household accounts, surviving artefacts and other comparative material. Bess's unpublished will and earlier inventories of Chatsworth and Northaw are also included in the analysis and presented as appendices.

Chapter Four analyses three iconographic themes: the assertion of identity, the government of the self, and the government of the nation. This is done by making detailed case studies and seeking to interpret the objects through contemporary ideas, sources and examples.

Chapter Five summarises the chief findings and interprets them in the context of Bess as a patron, her resources, influences and motivation.

The principal conclusions are that Bess did not invest heavily in creating Hardwick, that she did not create a palace for her royal grand-daughter and, most surprisingly, that she did not seek to build a house for the Cavendish dynasty. Instead, she created a personal monument.

Chapter One

Introduction

Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, was built in the 1590s for Elizabeth, Dowager Countess of Shrewsbury (Bess of Hardwick, c. 1527-1608).¹ It was the most significant work of the last phase of Bess's career as a patron of building projects. Her earlier achievements had included the building and subsequent remodelling of Chatsworth, and the extension of Hardwick Old Hall, whilst the 1590s also saw the building of almshouses in Derby and a house at Oldcotes for her second son, William Cavendish. Most of these buildings, however, have been demolished or significantly altered, whereas Hardwick survives, together with a significant quantity of its original furnishings and a wealth of documentation.

It is the intention of this study to consider the nature and purpose of the original furnishings and decoration of Hardwick Hall. It takes as its central premise the contention that the furnishings and decoration have two qualities: they are both physical objects and iconographic objects. As physical objects they must be constructed using specific materials and techniques, they must be acquired by the owner and they must be placed in particular locations within the building. As iconographic objects, they carry messages in the scenes depicted upon them which must be interpreted by the owner and by his or her associates. This dual nature allows a number of issues to be considered which reveal a great deal about the original furnishings and decoration of the Hall.

¹ The use of the name 'Bess of Hardwick' and, later in the work, simply 'Bess', is undoubtedly casual. However, it is used for ease of understanding and to avoid the problems which could arise from the more formal use of her married surname, which changed four times, or her maiden name, Hardwick, which risks confusion with the place. Her title of Countess of Shrewsbury is limited to one period of her life and, after the death of the Earl her husband in 1590, might lead to muddle with her daughter Mary, the subsequent Countess of Shrewsbury.

The questions related to the physical objects may be summarised in this way: what did Bess own; how did she acquire it; how did she use it within the building; and how did Bess's practices compare with those of her contemporaries? By considering these issues the reader should gain an increased understanding of how Bess created the interior of Hardwick, of her tastes, of the setting for life in the house, of how contemporaries might have regarded Bess's arrangements there, and whether the fortunate chance of survival at Hardwick has unduly influenced modern viewers to over-emphasise its importance as representative of late Elizabethan practice.

Consideration of the furnishings and decoration as iconographic objects raises different issues. Here, the principal questions are: what themes were presented to the viewer; how did individual pieces contribute to the themes; how were the themes distributed through the house; and how would a contemporary have interpreted the messages? Inherent in these questions is the assumption that there was an overall iconographical scheme. Through the discussion of these questions the reader should form an opinion on whether Bess had a didactic or simply a decorative purpose in her displays at Hardwick, and should also have a greater understanding of Bess's values, how she expressed them visually and how they might have been received by her peers.

These issues are addressed through a close study of documentary evidence and the surviving objects themselves, with reference to other contemporary visual sources and literature. The main documentary source, the 1601 inventory of Hardwick, which will be discussed below in the survey of current literature, is to be found at Chatsworth, which is the principal archive of material relating to Hardwick and the Cavendish family. Supporting documentary material has also

been found in the Folger Shakespeare Library, National Archives at Kew, Lambeth Palace Library and Sheffield City Archives. Hardwick Hall itself survives intact and is now in the care of the National Trust, who have been its guardians since the Duke of Devonshire gave the house to the Treasury in lieu of tax in the 1950s. The ruins of Hardwick Old Hall are also owned by the National Trust but are now managed by English Heritage. The best source of comparative artefacts is the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, but there are also relevant works in the Burrell Collection, Glasgow, and the Musée National de la Renaissance, Écouen, France.

After this present, introductory chapter the work is structured into four sections. It begins with a consideration of the interior plan of Hardwick Hall and the functions of the different areas, the 'social architecture' of Hardwick Hall, which provides the reader with an introduction to the organisation of space within the building and its social significance. The discussion of the furnishings and decoration as physical objects is contained within Chapter Three and consideration of their iconographical purpose appears as Chapter Four. The study concludes with a summation of Bess's achievement at Hardwick, including consideration of her resources, influences and motivation as a patron. In addition to the main body of work, certain key unpublished documents have been transcribed and edited and appear as appendices.

Having established the most important points to be considered in this study, the principal sources and the structure, the remainder of this introductory chapter will provide a brief biography of Bess and then a survey of the existing literature about Hardwick, in each case concentrating on areas of relevance to the larger study.

Bess of Hardwick and Hardwick Hall

It is not the intention to provide a new or revised biography of Bess here.

The standard biography remains *Bess of Hardwick: Portrait of an Elizabethan Dynast* by David N. Durant, which provides a straightforward narrative of her life and follows an earlier, comparable work by Ethel Carleton Williams.² Durant's work is based on archival research, primarily at Chatsworth, and is strong on dates, events and people. However, it is intended as a biography for the general reader and is therefore less strong on analysis of the material and interpretation of it within the wider context of sixteenth-century history. Closer study of the same archives reveals some points in which it is possible to disagree with Durant's conclusions but does not undermine the basic narrative framework which he has built. Elizabeth Goldring's contribution to the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* provides an effective summary of these earlier works and appears to draw heavily on Durant.³ Two recent studies, by James Daybell and Sara Jayne Steen, move away from complete biography and concentrate on specific aspects of Bess's career as revealed by her correspondence.⁴ These pieces, which escape from the treatment of Bess as romantic heroine or fanatical needleworker, indicate an interesting direction in which the study of Bess could be taken and make it

² David N. Durant, *Bess of Hardwick: Portrait of an Elizabethan Dynast*, rev. edn (London: Peter Owen, 1999). There are only minor revisions from the original book of 1977. Ethel Carleton Williams, *Bess of Hardwick* (London: Longmans, 1959). Maud Stepney Rawson, *Bess of Hardwick and her Circle* (London: Hutchinson, 1910), provides a more fanciful biography. Bess's life was dramatised by the BBC in the early 1970s as a six-part series, which was accompanied by Alison Plowden, *Mistress of Hardwick* (London: BBC, 1972). Two recent brief books, Elisabeth Eisenberg, *This Costly Countess: Bess of Hardwick* (Derby: Hall, 1985), and Kate Hubbard, *A Material Girl: Bess of Hardwick, 1527-1608* (London, Short Books, 2001), do not add to Durant's work.

³ Elizabeth Goldring, 'Talbot, Elizabeth [Bess of Hardwick], countess of Shrewsbury (1527?-1608)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26925>> [accessed 16 October 2004].

⁴ James Daybell, '“Suche newes as on the Quenes hye wayes we have mett”: The News and Intelligence Networks of Elizabeth Talbot, countess of Shrewsbury (c. 1527-1608)', in *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700*, ed. by James Daybell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 114-131; Sara Jayne Steen, 'The Cavendish-Talbot Women: Playing a High-Stakes Game', in the same volume, pp. 147-63.

clear that Bess's life could withstand the more detailed and scholarly scrutiny of a new academic biography. However, here it is only necessary to provide the reader with a brief outline of Bess's life in order to supply a contextual framework for the discussion which follows in subsequent chapters. In the absence of a more recent biography, this account relies principally on the work of David Durant.

There is no precise evidence of Bess's date of birth but the year 1527 is now generally accepted.⁵ She was the third of four daughters born to John Hardwick and his wife, Elizabeth Leake, and she also had one brother, James. The Hardwick family itself had been at Hardwick since at least the early fourteenth century and by the early sixteenth century held around four hundred acres of land in the area.⁶ John Hardwick died in 1528 and his widow married Ralph Leche, a younger son of the family who held Chatsworth at that time, and they had three daughters, all of whom later remained in close association with Bess (Table One: Hardwick and Leche).⁷ There is a dearth of information about Bess's childhood but in about 1543 she was married to Robert Barlow or Barley of Barley in Derbyshire, becoming a widow for the first time in December 1544.⁸ To this point, Bess's circle seems to consist principally of the minor gentry of Derbyshire, people of restricted, local consequence. However, it is possible, albeit on extremely slender evidence, that at the time of her first marriage she was in the more socially elevated household of Lady Zouch in London, receiving the

⁵ Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 2. Whilst Durant shows that Bess cannot have been born any later than 1527, he does not present a clear case about why she should not have been born earlier. Some previous authors have offered 1518 or 1520 for her birth, the latter probably drawn from the age given on her tomb, although the inscription is not contemporary. The year 1527 makes the most sense in terms of her subsequent life, especially the ages this would make her at her marriages and the birth of her children.

⁶ David Crook, 'Hardwick Before Bess: The Origins and Early History of the Hardwick Family and their Estate', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 107 (1987), pp. 41-54.

⁷ A brief account of the Leche family and their association with Chatsworth may be found in Francis Thompson, *A History of Chatsworth, Being a Supplement to the Sixth Duke of Devonshire's Handbook* (London: Country Life, 1949), pp. 22-3.

⁸ Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, pp. 8-10.

education in domestic matters which was customary for girls of her class.⁹ It is generally considered that the young widowed Bess was subsequently in the household of Lord and Lady Grey, the Marquis and Marchioness of Dorset. The evidence for this is slim but a little more substantial than that for the connection with the Zouch household. Bess undoubtedly enjoyed some form of relationship with the Grey family, several of whom stood as godparents to her children, and her second marriage, to Sir William Cavendish, took place at Bradgate Manor, the Leicestershire home of the Grey family.¹⁰

Bess married Sir William Cavendish on 20 August 1547 in a ceremony held at Bradgate at two o'clock in the morning.¹¹ Cavendish was about twenty years older than his new wife and had surviving daughters from one of his previous marriages. A successful court official, he may have begun his career in the household of Cardinal Wolsey alongside his elder brother, George Cavendish, and was certainly later to be found working for Thomas Cromwell. He was involved in the processes of closing religious houses and held several posts of responsibility arising from that work. By 1546, the year before his marriage to Bess, he had been appointed to the Court of General Surveyors, was Treasurer of

⁹ Although widely repeated, the association of Bess with the Zouch household appears to be based on only one piece of evidence, which is found in the work of an antiquarian, Nathaniel Johnson, writing in 1692. In describing the marriage of Bess and Barley he refers to information given by 'some ancient gentlemen' that the bride was at that time in London 'attending the Lady Zouch'. Whilst it is not impossible that Bess should have been in the household of a Derbyshire neighbour and distant relative, no corroboration of this claim is known. The full quotation from Johnson is given in Durant, p. 9.

¹⁰ Frances Grey was godmother to Bess's eldest daughter, Frances (b. 1548), Jane Grey to Temperance (b. 1549), Katherine Grey to Elizabeth (b. 1555); Henry Grey was godfather to Henry (b. 1550) and Charles (b. 1553). Arthur Collins, *Historical Collections of the Noble Families of Cavendish, Holles, Vere, Harley, and Ogle* (London: [n. pub.], 1752), pp. 11-12. It is generally assumed that the connection was on Bess's side but the possibility that it lay with William Cavendish cannot be entirely ruled out.

¹¹ Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 1. The details are known from a notebook belonging to William Cavendish, now lost, but which was seen by Arthur Collins and included in his *Historical Collections*. The unusual hour is not explained. Sybil Jack in her article on Cavendish in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (see below) assumes that the marriage was carried out secretly, although she does not offer a reason for such secrecy and it is difficult to discern a motive.

the King's Chamber and may have been a Privy Councillor.¹² When not in London, Bess and Cavendish lived primarily at Northaw, Hertfordshire, in the first few years of their marriage and the inventory of furnishings for that house will be discussed in Chapter Three and is transcribed in full in Appendix One.¹³ In 1549 the Cavendishes bought the manor of Chatsworth in Derbyshire and, by a profitable exchange of lands with the Crown in 1552 and by other acquisitions, were able to consolidate their land holdings in that area and quit Northaw altogether. They built a substantial house at Chatsworth, for which a 'platt' or design was drawn by the mason Roger Worde, but this building was later enlarged after Cavendish's death.¹⁴ The luxurious furnishings of the early house at Chatsworth are represented by the inventory of 1559 and that of the 1560s, which appear here as Appendices Two and Three.¹⁵ The marriage also led to the birth of

¹² Cavendish lacks a detailed study. His career, his land management problems, his building and furnishing projects, as well as his eventual fall, would seem to make him a fascinating example of a mid-Tudor court official. A good summary of Cavendish's career is provided by Sybil M. Jack, 'Cavendish, Sir William (1508-1557)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4943>> [accessed 16 October 2004].

¹³ Durant (p. 16) mistakenly states that when in London Bess and Cavendish occupied a house in Newgate Street which they rented from the Marquis of Northampton, and this error has been repeated by later writers. It arises from a misinterpretation of the household accounts for 1550 which are contained in Folger Shakespeare Library MS X.d.486. These include a reference to a payment of 38s. 4d. 'to my lord marques of northampton for my half yerres rent of Newgate Streat', which would have suggested the London location (the manuscript is unpaginated but this reference might informally be considered p. 19). However, other entries in the accounts show that payments for Newgate Street were made to the bailiffs of Hatfield and Hoddesdon acting on behalf of the Marquis (p. 12) and that the holding at Newgate Street included a farm (p. 30). Cavendish was also in receipt of rent for something in Newgate Street (p. 4). These entries in the accounts seem less likely to be connected with a London property. A map of Hertfordshire in fact reveals that the village of Newgate Street is situated adjacent to Northaw and *The Victoria History of the County of Hertford*, ed. by William Page, 4 vols (London: Constable, 1902-1923), III, p. 106, shows that the manor was in the hands of William Parr, Marquis of Northampton, from 1529 onwards. Rather than a reference to a London house, the reference to Newgate Street appears to indicate a local land transaction in a neighbouring village in Hertfordshire. In 1548 William Cavendish was living in Aldersgate Ward in London, where he was assessed for light horses and demilances, and, as the family is also known to have had a house there later, it is likely that this is the location of the London residence of the Cavendishes at this time.

¹⁴ Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick MS 1, fol. 10.

¹⁵ The Chatsworth inventory which is here dated 1559 has previously been considered to date from 1553. For a discussion of this revised dating see Appendix Two. The date 1559 will be used throughout this work without further comment.

eight children, six of whom survived infancy (Table Two: Hardwick and Cavendish).

Cavendish died in 1557 whilst under investigation for the discrepancy of £5237 5s. ¾d. in his accounts as Treasurer of the Chamber, responsibility for the repayment of which passed to his widow.¹⁶ Bess's financial problems were largely resolved by two fortunate occurrences: in 1558 Mary Tudor died and was succeeded by her sister, who appears to have had a benevolent attitude towards Bess, and in 1559 the widow Cavendish took as her third husband Sir William St. Loe, a courtier standing high in the new queen's favour after his support of her during Mary's reign. The St. Loe marriage, during which Bess continued her work at Chatsworth, lasted until his death, probably early in 1565.¹⁷

Bess's last marriage, to George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, in 1567 lifted her into the highest ranks of the English aristocracy, with all its opportunities for the acquisition of wealth, for the display of magnificent ostentation, for access to elite culture, and for social advancement through the manipulation of family alliances.¹⁸ Within a very few months of their parents' marriage, Bess's eldest son, Henry Cavendish, was married to Talbot's daughter, Grace, and Bess's youngest daughter, Mary, was married to Talbot's second son, Gilbert, following a contract which allowed for the substitution of other children should any of the principal parties fail to survive until the marriage.¹⁹ Although the marriage of Bess and Talbot appears to have started in reasonable harmony, it is difficult to

¹⁶ Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, pp. 28-30.

¹⁷ Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, pp. 31-49, deals with the years as Lady St. Loe, which were eventful but not relevant to the themes studied here.

¹⁸ George Talbot has not been the subject of a full biography. He has tended to be relegated to a supporting player in biographies of Bess and of Mary, Queen of Scots, but his achievements warrant a role greater than that of argumentative husband or harassed gaoler. Elizabeth Goldring, 'Talbot, George, sixth earl of Shrewsbury (c. 1522-1590)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26928>> [accessed 16 October 2004].

¹⁹ Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Un-numbered manuscript in box labelled 'Bess and Earls Misc. II'. The document also proves that Bess and Talbot were already married by 7 January 1568.

see it as anything but an arrangement based on sound business sense, even if Bess also made a considerable gain in social position.

Talbot's social position, his wealth and his loyalty to the Crown made him the chosen candidate to take responsibility for Mary, Queen of Scots, during much of her captivity in England. Whilst it is unnecessary to make extended comment here on Mary's imprisonment in England, it is appropriate to note that she was under the guardianship of Talbot from 1569 to 1584, during which time her presence in the household had a major influence on Bess, either directly through personal contact between the two women, perhaps allowing Mary's French tastes and contacts to rub off on Bess, or indirectly through the practical requirements of housing the deposed monarch in a manner both secure and suitable for her estate. This was a contradictory period for Bess and Talbot since the position of guardian to the Queen of Scots was both a great honour and an onerous burden. In terms relevant to this study, it was an encouragement to building and display, but also an exclusion from the courtly culture of their peers. Guardianship led to a period of isolation for Talbot and to a lesser extent for Bess, since the need to be in constant attendance on Mary kept them from their natural place in the company of their own Queen and her courtiers, amongst the fashions and tastes of the court.²⁰ On the other hand, the Talbot household was the subject of a great deal of interest and the need to impress, perhaps to appear worthy of their task both socially and financially, seems to have led to a great deal of artistic effort. This effort was primarily focussed on Chatsworth, Bess's own house, which, along with Talbot's Sheffield Castle and Manor, was one of the principal places in which Mary was kept. At Chatsworth the earlier house was developed to include a new second

²⁰ Daybell, ' "Suche newes as on the Quenes hye wayes we have mett" ', makes interesting comments on Bess's need for news at this time when she was away from the heart of court affairs.

floor, which raised the building another storey above the existing structure and contained rooms for the captive and for visitors such as the Earl of Leicester.²¹ These rooms were lavishly furnished and decorated and although there are no inventories and almost no household accounts for this most exciting phase at Chatsworth, many of the artefacts reappeared at Hardwick and some have survived to the present.

From the early 1580s Talbot and Bess led increasingly separate lives in an atmosphere of rancour and resentment, despite the intervention of their friends, court officials and even the Queen. Effectively excluded from Chatsworth, Bess sought a new home and purchased the Hardwick estate in the name of her second son, William Cavendish, from the executors of her late brother in 1583.²² Never reconciled to his wife, Talbot died in 1590, the same year in which Bess began to build the new house at Hardwick on a site adjacent to the existing building on which she had been working for several years. The building works which were undertaken on these two projects at Hardwick will be discussed in Chapter Two. During the 1590s Bess was also responsible for building works at Oldcotes, just a few miles north-west of Hardwick. The manor had ostensibly been acquired by William Cavendish, Bess's son, but it is clear that the money for the purchase and the subsequent building works and furnishings came from his mother. The house which was built at Oldcotes has now entirely gone but it may be considered to have been impressive, although smaller than Hardwick. As this study concentrates

²¹ Mark Girouard, 'Elizabethan Chatsworth', *Country Life*, 154 (22 November 1973), 1668-72. Leicester stayed at Chatsworth in 1577 after taking the waters at Buxton.

²² Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 104. It appears that James Hardwick had died a bankrupt in the Fleet Gaol shortly before April 1581. Although twice married, he left no legitimate heirs. One son, John Hardwick, lived at Tibshelf, near to Hardwick, and was treated as a pensioner by Bess.

on Hardwick, Oldcotes will not be considered in any detail here.²³ The new house at Hardwick was sufficiently finished for Bess to move in by October 1597.

Furnishings for it were made, brought from other houses or purchased and the contents of both Hardwick Halls and Chatsworth were recorded by inventories in 1601, which were commissioned to support Bess's will. The 1601 inventory of Hardwick New Hall forms the core of the discussion in Chapter Three and Bess's will, which has never been published in full, appears as Appendix Four.

Bess's household frequently contained her orphaned grand-daughter, Arbella Stuart, the daughter of Elizabeth Cavendish and Charles Stuart, Earl of Lennox.²⁴ Through her father and his descent from Margaret Tudor, elder daughter of Henry VII, Arbella had a strong claim to the English throne. The extent of Bess's ambition in relation to Arbella's royal blood remains a point of contention amongst historians but of relevance to this study is the question of whether Hardwick was intended as a reflection of Arbella's royal status, a setting for a future queen. This issue and the related question of whether Hardwick indicates Bess's dynastic pretensions for her Cavendish family line arise most strongly in Chapter Four, during the discussion of the decorative themes to be found in the new house.

²³ Pamela Kettle, *Oldcotes: The Last Mansion Built by Bess of Hardwick* (Cardiff: Merton Priory Press, 2000). Oldcotes has yet to receive detailed analysis. Pamela Kettle makes a reasonable survey of the known evidence and her work could form the basis of further, more analytical research. There is certainly material in the Chatsworth archives which could be used to further understanding of the initial building and furnishing of Cavendish's house.

²⁴ Arbella Stuart (1575-1615) has been the subject of several biographies, including Sarah Gristwood, *Arbella: England's Lost Queen* (London: Bantam, 2003); David N. Durant, *Arbella Stuart: A Rival to the Queen* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978); and P.M. Handover, *Arbella Stuart: Royal Lady of Hardwick* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957). Sarah Gristwood's work includes authoritative notes on sources as well as a bibliography. *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart*, ed. by Sara Jane Steen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), provides a critical edition of Arbella's correspondence and contains a wide-ranging introduction which draws particular attention to the documentary sources. Arbella's life is briefly summarised in Rosalind K. Marshall, 'Stuart, Lady Arbella (1575-1615)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/601>> [accessed 16 October 2004].

Bess died in February 1608 at Hardwick and was buried in the Church of All Hallows in Derby, now the Cathedral, in a tomb constructed during her lifetime.²⁵ There is no clear indication of why she chose Derby to establish a family vault. It is to be assumed that she wished to create a new focus for Cavendish memorials and that, in the absence of a cathedral within the county, a large church in the county town appealed. Bess does not seem to have had close links with Derby, although between 1598 and 1600 she also built and endowed a new almshouse there.²⁶ Two things, however, are apparent: that Bess wanted to establish a magnificent new mausoleum for herself and probably her Cavendish family, and that this was to be at some distance from George Talbot's monument in Sheffield.²⁷ Bess's tomb itself and part of the family vault survive, even though the church has been rebuilt.²⁸ Although there are no records in Bess's household accounts referring to the design or construction of the tomb, it is generally attributed to Robert Smythson. Amongst his surviving drawings is a design for Bess's tomb, which differs only very slightly from the finished monument, and another design for a Cavendish tomb at Derby which has certainly not survived and may possibly never have been built. Mark Girouard has suggested that the second tomb is evidence that Bess intended to create a monument to her second husband, William Cavendish, but it could also have been designed speculatively

²⁵ Durant's widely-followed implication (pp. 223-4) that Bess's body lay in state at Hardwick for three months can now be refuted. Various records show that her corpse was removed to Derby within a few days of her death, although the funeral itself did not take place until early May. I hope to return in the future to evidence relating to Bess's death, tomb and funeral, and the arguments which arose between her family members in the period following these events.

²⁶ Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 194.

²⁷ Lawrence Butler, 'The Tombs of George, Sixth Earl of Shrewsbury in Sheffield Cathedral', *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society*, 20 (1999), 52-61.

²⁸ Lawrence Butler and Richard Morris, 'Derby Cathedral: The Cavendish Vault', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 114 (1994), 14-28.

for one of her sons.²⁹ That Bess's tomb was prepared in her lifetime is clear from her will, which notes, 'my Bodie I committ into the earthe whereof yt came, and to be buried in All Hallowes church at Derby in the place of the same church where yt is appoynted and Determynd that my Tombe and monument shalbe erected and builde, which at this present ys finished and Wanteth nothing but setting vp'.³⁰

The ennoblement of the Cavendish family began soon after Bess's death. In 1605 her second son, William, had already become Baron Cavendish of Hardwick and in 1618 he was created Earl of Devonshire.³¹ In 1694 the 4th Earl became 1st Duke of Devonshire and the direct line continues to the present.³² Bess's descendants made Chatsworth their principal seat, extensively remodelling it in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries at the time of their elevation from an earldom to a dukedom.³³ The loss of Elizabethan Chatsworth is extremely unfortunate but the decision to modernise that house was undoubtedly key to the survival of Hardwick. The family never abandoned Hardwick and there were minor alterations there, which will be outlined briefly in Chapter Two, but

²⁹ Mark Girouard, 'The Smythson Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects', *Architectural History*, 5 (1962), 23-184, (pp. 30, 68-9). William Cavendish, Bess's husband, was buried in the church of St. Botolph without Aldersgate, London. William Cavendish, her son, was buried under an extraordinarily elaborate tomb in the parish church at Edensor, the village next to Chatsworth. Despite Bess's grand plans in Derby, Edensor became the major burial place of her descendants.

³⁰ Public Record Office, PROB 11/111, fol. 188; cf. Appendix Four.

³¹ William Cavendish, 1st Earl of Devonshire, also lacks a detailed study. The archives at Chatsworth contain a good series of his household accounts and reveal a great deal about his personal affairs, his legal and business interests, which included investment in overseas projects in Russia, Bermuda and Virginia, his building and furnishing works and his domestic arrangements. Of particular interest, the accounts also contain detailed lists of his purchases of books and pamphlets, which show him to have had a wide interest, from classical works, through maps and geographical books, to lurid and scandalous pamphlets. His public career is briefly summarised in Carole Levin, 'Cavendish, William, first earl of Devonshire (1551-1626)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/4944>> [accessed 16 October 2004].

³² John Pearson, *Stags and Serpents: A History of the Cavendish Family and the Dukes of Devonshire*, rev. edn (Bakewell: The Chatsworth House Trust, 2002), provides a simple narrative of the family from Bess to the 11th Duke (d. 2004). Through Bess's third son, Charles, were descended the Dukes of Newcastle and the Dukes of Portland.

³³ Thompson, *A History of Chatsworth*, passim.

by the second half of the eighteenth century the family had adopted an antiquarian attitude towards Hardwick, finding a frisson of romance and history in its largely unaltered state and its associations with Bess and especially with Mary, Queen of Scots. In the eighteenth century, the impossibility of Mary's having been at Hardwick New Hall, her execution having taken place three years before building works began, was no hindrance to creating a sense of Hardwick's past and her ghostly presence was, indeed, a positive encouragement to the Hall's material preservation. As Mark Girouard has noted, 'Hardwick began to acquire a reputation as a curiosity, an untouched survival from the past,' and several contemporary writers commented on the immediacy of the association with Mary, Queen of Scots.³⁴ A slightly more realistic attitude towards Hardwick was taken by the 6th Duke (d. 1858), although 'his approach was visual and romantic rather than scholarly or historical', and he brought old furnishings to Hardwick from his other houses and attempted to recreate the Elizabethan atmosphere to an even greater extent.³⁵ By the late nineteenth century the idea that Hardwick should be respected as a memorial to Bess and the Elizabethan age was firmly and unshakeably established and when the house had to be given up to the Treasury in lieu of tax in 1956, and was subsequently passed to the National Trust, its role as representative of all things Elizabethan was irrevocably set. Clearly, the idea of Hardwick's immutability is as much a romantic fiction as the eighteenth century's association of the house with Mary, Queen of Scots, but, even without these amusing fallacies, the house and its remaining original furnishings and decorations are a remarkable survival.

³⁴ Mark Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, rev. edn (London: The National Trust, 1989), pp. 39-41.

³⁵ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 44. William George Spencer Cavendish, *Handbook of Chatsworth and Hardwick* (London: the author, 1845).

Existing Studies of Hardwick and the Scope for New Work

Hardwick has been the subject of many previous writers, across a range varying from romantic novelists to authoritative academics, but close reading of their work shows that much of the material simply passes from one author to another without question. It is appropriate, therefore, to consider the contributions of the most significant authors in the areas covered by this study. The survey follows the framework of the chapters used in this work and outlined above.

It is not the intention here to add to the already substantial literature on the external appearance of Hardwick Hall, the origins of its architecture or its relation to other contemporary buildings. Rather, it is the organisation of space within the building and its social implications which will be considered in Chapter Two, and this analysis is offered as a necessary introduction to the discussion of the furnishings and decoration which follows. The architecture has been most graphically discussed in Mark Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House*.³⁶ He considers Hardwick within the canon of the works of Smythson, making particular comparison with the architect's work at Wollaton and Worksop, and finding in Hardwick 'a true synthesis' between gothic and classical architectural styles. The same author's *Life in the English Country House* informs the understanding of the social use of space at this period.³⁷ In his work on the architecture of Hardwick, Girouard makes use of the surviving building accounts. These had formed the basis of a study by Basil Stallybrass in 1913 and were later published in full and discussed by David N. Durant and Philip Riden, who presented transcriptions of the records and analyses of the building sequence

³⁶ Mark Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 143-62.

³⁷ Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), especially Chapter Four.

and the careers of Bess's workmen.³⁸ These building records have also informed general works such as Malcolm Airs, *The Tudor & Jacobean Country House: A Building History*.³⁹

More recently, the architecture has received a feminist interpretation by Sara Lillian French in her doctoral dissertation, 'Women, Space and Power: The Building and Use of Hardwick Hall in Elizabethan England'.⁴⁰ In this work, Sara French acknowledges the influence of the early work of Alice Friedman, especially her book on Wollaton and her wider paper on early modern domestic planning, gender relations and household structure.⁴¹ As Sara French's dissertation seems to lie so close to the subject matter of this current work, it is appropriate to consider its principal aims and conclusions. French's dissertation 'seeks to integrate the study of Hardwick Hall [...] to larger discourses in feminist architectural history and theory'.⁴² Within this framework she isolates three particular questions to be explored:

How did Bess of Hardwick amass enough power and prestige to build a house of Hardwick's size and importance? Why did this particular house change the basic form of the interior space, the great hall, which had been so common from the Medieval period

³⁸ Basil Stallybrass, 'Bess of Hardwick's Buildings and Building Accounts', *Archaeologia*, 64 (1913), 347-98; David N. Durant and Philip Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 1: The Old Hall, 1587-91 and Part 2: The New Hall, 1591-98* (Chesterfield: Derbyshire Record Society, 1980 and 1984).

³⁹ Malcolm Airs, *The Tudor & Jacobean Country House: A Building History* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995).

⁴⁰ Sara Lillian French, 'Women, Space and Power: The Building and Use of Hardwick Hall in Elizabethan England' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Binghamton University, State University of New York, 2000). In a briefer version, Sara French's doctoral work provides the material for her article, 'A Widow Building in Elizabethan England: Bess of Hardwick at Hardwick Hall', in *Widowhood and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Allison Levy (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 161-76.

⁴¹ Alice T. Friedman, *House and Household in Elizabethan England: Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Alice T. Friedman, 'Architecture, Authority, and the Female Gaze: Planning and Representation in the Early Modern Country House', *Assemblage*, 18 (1992), 41-61.

⁴² French, 'Women, Space and Power', p. iv.

until the late sixteenth century? Finally, in what ways can the changes at Hardwick be attributed to the gender of the patron of Hardwick, or be seen as the inevitable or logical outcome of the reign of a woman in Britain for over forty years?⁴³

In order to address these questions, Sara French offers a lengthy summary of Bess's biography, drawn largely from the work of David N. Durant, complemented by consideration of the historical background to her life, the role of Queen Elizabeth I and, most trenchantly, discussion of contemporary attitudes towards the 'problem' of women's gender. In Chapter Three, French discusses Bess's earlier building works at Chatsworth, drawing on Girouard's work on Elizabethan Chatsworth, against the background of other mid-century aristocratic building projects, and briefly describes furnishings which were once at Chatsworth but which have survived at modern Hardwick.⁴⁴ She also gives interesting consideration to the work of James Hardwick, Bess's brother, at Hardwick Old Hall and does much to reinstate the reputation of that building in Bess's hands. Whilst French notes that there is no satisfactory reconstruction of the house's layout above ground, she does not offer one herself, an omission which will be remedied in this current study in Chapter Two. Hardwick New Hall is discussed in detail in French's fourth chapter. She presents a description of the façade and plan and then attempts 'to walk the reader through Hardwick' as a substitute for the sensory experience of moving through the building itself.⁴⁵ The most valuable part of the discussion is her consideration of the changing great hall, which she sees to have had an influence on the social as well as the visual organisation of the house. She closes the chapter with a brief discussion of the

⁴³ French, 'Women, Space and Power', p. 42.

⁴⁴ Girouard, 'Elizabethan Chatsworth', pp. 1668-72.

⁴⁵ French, 'Women, Space and Power', p. 221.

house's decoration and finds herself to be in some disagreement with the conclusions of Anthony Wells-Cole.⁴⁶ This discussion of the decorative scheme at Hardwick is brief and leaves room for the much more detailed analysis offered here in Chapter Four.

Sara French answers her own first two questions, how could Bess build Hardwick and how had the great hall evolved, in a straightforward manner. Surprisingly, given her strong presentation of the 'larger discourses in feminist architectural history and theory', it is her gender-specific issues concerning the design of the house and the influence of a female monarch which are answered with the least persuasiveness. She writes: 'Is Hardwick a "woman's house?" The answer, of course, is yes, for Bess not only was the patron of the project, she was the head of the household and changed the arrangement of traditional spaces in the domestic interior.'⁴⁷ Furthermore, the 'spaces at Hardwick, created, changed, and used by a woman, must have been different, for a "woman's house" could not be the same as other country houses of the sixteenth century.'⁴⁸ The implied assertion that Hardwick must inevitably have been built differently if it had been built by a man is not addressed rigorously. Beyond her specific conclusions, Sara French makes an interesting contribution to the literature on the architecture of Hardwick Hall by discussing it within the context of feminist historical and architectural theory.

The current work moves in Chapter Three to discussion of the furnishings as physical objects. The core documentary evidence for this study is the 1601 inventory of the contents of Hardwick. Inventories of Bess's three houses at

⁴⁶ French, 'Women, Space and Power', pp. 241-8; Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Influence of Continental Prints, 1558-1625* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 247-95.

⁴⁷ French, 'Women, Space and Power', p. 249.

⁴⁸ French, 'Women, Space and Power', p. 252.

Hardwick and Chatsworth were commissioned to accompany her will of that year. The inventory of the New Hall has been published and its publishing history is detailed at the start of Chapter Three. On its original publication in 1971, the inventory was accompanied by brief introductory essays by Lindsay Boynton, who had edited the text, and by Peter Thornton.⁴⁹ Boynton's essay concentrated on the history of Bess, the building of the house and its later survival. He made a short written tour of the house and noted descriptions of the rooms' contents and showed how these had changed through time. His material seems to have had a strong influence on Mark Girouard's later guide book for the National Trust.⁵⁰ Thornton's introductory essay has more relevance to this study. Concentrating closely on the text of the 1601 inventory, he provides a brief description of the furnishing of the Hall. He later noted:

It was a very early exercise in setting down such material in a rather novel way, not just dealing with furnishings as individual antiques, but also trying to deduce how furnishings were used and functioned as an ensemble [...] It pointed the way to my *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration* (Yale University Press, 1978) [...] I shall probably now write a sequel.⁵¹

Until the sequel should appear there is still room to develop this approach, even with the Hardwick material. Whilst Thornton's introductory essay has proved inspirational for the present study, especially in the concept of studying an

⁴⁹ Lindsay Boynton, 'The Hardwick Hall Inventory of 1601', *Journal of the Furniture History Society*, 7 (1971), 1-40; *The Hardwick Hall Inventories of 1601*, ed. by Lindsay Boynton (London: Furniture History Society, 1971). The first version contained only the inventory of Hardwick New Hall. The subsequent monograph also contained the inventory of Hardwick Old Hall.

⁵⁰ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*.

⁵¹ *Of Household Stuff: The 1601 Inventories of Bess of Hardwick* (London: The National Trust, 2001), p. 12. Peter Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France and Holland* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978).

‘ensemble’ rather than ‘individual antiques’, its brevity has allowed the much more expansive analysis which follows.

Thornton’s essay, with only a brief note of revision, was reproduced in 2001 when the National Trust republished the Hardwick inventories of 1601 alongside the previously unpublished 1601 inventory of Chatsworth.⁵² It then accompanied an introduction by Santina M. Levey, which outlines the circumstances of the building of the three houses and summarises the contents of the inventories, perhaps with slightly greater concern for objects at the lower end of the social scale. Levey also briefly draws attention to items which are not present in the inventory and to the important link between the inventories and Bess’s will.⁵³ These two issues are crucial to an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the 1601 inventory, the core evidence for the early stages of this present study. Bess’s will has not been published in full, although Arthur Collins reproduced brief extracts from it in 1752.⁵⁴ In order to remedy this failing, the full text of the will has been edited and is presented here as Appendix Four, together with notes on the different copies of the will and inventories and other relevant documents. Analysis of the will and reference to other documentary evidence found in the archive at Chatsworth, the principal repository of family papers relating to Bess and Hardwick, allows for a much more detailed discussion of the inventory. This detailed discussion appears at the beginning of Chapter Three before the examination of the furnishings as physical objects.

⁵² *Of Household Stuff*.

⁵³ Much of the material for her introductory essay had already appeared in Santina M. Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance: The Hardwick Hall Textiles* (London: The National Trust, 1998). The absent items and the reasons for limited survival are discussed further in the same author’s ‘Fitted for Survival: What the Selection Made by Survival Reveals’, in *Textiles Revealed: Object Lessons in Historic Textile and Costume Research*, ed. by Mary M. Brooks (London: Archetype Publications, 2000), pp. 79-88.

⁵⁴ Collins, *Historical Collections*, pp. 15-18.

Of all the contents of Hardwick Hall it is the textiles which have received the most attention previously. The most detailed account is that provided by Santina M. Levey in *An Elizabethan Inheritance: The Hardwick Hall Textiles*, which gives a general history of the textiles there to the early twentieth century, with particular emphasis on the Elizabethan items.⁵⁵ The early part of the work is essentially structured according to textile techniques – tapestries, wrought linen, needlework and embroidery *inter alia* – and concentrates on the physical appearance and construction of these items but also notes sources of designs and methods of acquisition where known. Santina Levey's detailed catalogue of Hardwick's textiles in the extended Elizabethan period is under way and keenly anticipated. This will presumably enlarge on her earlier work and also on other studies of individual pieces, such as John Nevinson's identification of the printed sources for the plants depicted in the needlework octagons at Hardwick, and Marcel Roethlisberger's discussion of the *Ulysses* tapestries, in which he compares the Hardwick pieces with other contemporary tapestry depictions of the same subject.⁵⁶ The needlework of Mary, Queen of Scots, which is in part closely associated with Hardwick and Bess, has been described by Margaret Swain and others.⁵⁷ All these studies deal primarily with the textiles themselves as physical objects. Much less attention has been paid to the interpretation of subjects depicted in the textiles, although two studies by Richard Pick and Margaret Ellis, coincidentally both concerned with the appliqué panels of virtues, show the

⁵⁵ See above, note 53.

⁵⁶ John Nevinson, 'An Elizabethan Herbarium: Embroideries by Bess of Hardwick after the Woodcuts of Mattioli', in *The National Trust Year Book 1975-76*, ed. by Gervase Jackson-Stops (London: The National Trust, [1975]), pp. 65-9; Marcel Roethlisberger, 'The Ulysses Tapestries at Hardwick Hall', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 6th series, 77 (1972), 111-25.

⁵⁷ Margaret Swain, *The Needlework of Mary Queen of Scots* (Carlton: Ruth Bean, 1986).

possibilities of this approach.⁵⁸ Finally, Bess's textiles have also supplied material for a number of studies within the feminist tradition, which concentrate not on individual textiles but on the empowerment of women through the use of textiles to form social networks, to be active participants in cultural exchange, and to make personal and political statements.⁵⁹

It is clear that a great deal has already been written about the Hardwick textiles. Whilst this study undoubtedly draws on the work of these earlier authors, particularly Santina Levey, it also seeks to augment it in four particular ways. First, the textiles are not given the prominence which they usually receive when they are discussed in isolation from the other furnishings at Hardwick. In Chapter Three, items which happen to be textiles, wall-hangings and carpets, are considered alongside furniture, beds and pictures, items which may include textiles but are not primarily textile. In Chapter Four, textiles appear amongst paintings and plasterwork as media for the communication of messages contained in subject matter. This approach marks an intentional break with the traditional primacy of textiles amongst the furnishings of Hardwick Hall. The customary treatment of textiles as a discrete group has often been echoed by the consideration of Hardwick's furnishings in isolation from those of other houses.

⁵⁸ Richard Pick, 'The Worthy Ladies of Hardwick Hall', *Theatre History Studies*, 13 (1993), 115-34; Margaret Ellis, 'The Hardwick Wall-Hangings: An Unusual Collaboration in English Sixteenth-Century Embroidery', *Renaissance Studies*, 10 (1996), 280-300. Pick discusses the panels of classical heroines in the context of contemporary theatre and triumphal pageants. Ellis ranges more widely in her article but offers some interesting interpretations of the figures and their attributes and briefly makes an arguably rather tenuous association with witchcraft.

⁵⁹ For example, Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: The Women's Press, 1984), especially Chapter Four; Lisa M. Klein, 'Your Humble Handmaid: Elizabethan Gifts of Needlework', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 50 (1997), 459-93; Susan Frye, 'Sewing Connections: Elizabeth Tudor, Mary Stuart, Elizabeth Talbot, and Seventeenth-Century Anonymous Needleworkers', in *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women's Alliances in Early Modern England*, ed. by Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 165-82; Susan Frye, 'Maternal Textualities', in *Maternal Measures: Figuring Caregiving in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 224-36; Sophia Jane Holroyd, 'Embroidered Rhetoric: The Social, Religious and Political Functions of Élite Women's Needlework, c. 1560-1630' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 2002).

The second way in which this study seeks to augment the discussion of the Hardwick textiles is by making frequent comparison with the textile furnishings of other buildings, principally, owing to the limited survival of these fragile artefacts, through comparison with other inventories. Thirdly, the presentation of Bess's earlier inventories, which are mentioned in the main text and presented in full in the appendices, allows a more detailed analysis of the survival and development of her textile collections. Finally, this work takes a more detailed look at the distribution of the textiles through Hardwick Hall, their groupings, hierarchies and the relationship with the social functions of the rooms in which they were placed.

These four methods also form the basis of the consideration of Hardwick's other furnishings. These have received much less coverage than the textiles and this study will therefore be concerned to provide basic information about acquisition and composition of the kind which other authors have made available about textiles but ignored elsewhere. In addition to Peter Thornton's introductory essay mentioned above, discussion of the furniture has previously consisted mostly of a few studies of individual pieces. For example, the French origins of the design of the 'sea doges' table have been discussed by Simon Jervis, who identified the creatures amongst the drawings of Jacques Androuet de Cerceau.⁶⁰ David Bostwick has expanded this a little in his article on the French furniture of Hardwick Hall, which draws attention to Bess and Talbot's interest in imported pieces.⁶¹ The music depicted on the 'eglantine' table has been analysed by David Collins, who revealed that one section represented a setting of 'O Lord in Thee is

⁶⁰ Simon Jervis, *Printed Furniture Designs Before 1650* (London: The Furniture History Society, 1974), pp. 25-6.

⁶¹ David Bostwick, 'The French Walnut Furniture at Hardwick Hall', *Journal of the Furniture History Society*, 31 (1995), 1-6.

all my trust' by Thomas Tallis, and Collins also made observations on the musical instruments shown on the table.⁶² This study seeks to consider the furniture as a whole rather than to concentrate on the detailed study of individual pieces. The 1601 inventory provides information about the distribution of the furniture and, by studying surviving household accounts, it is possible to find information about the acquisition of furniture to complement existing information about the textiles.

The paintings at Hardwick Hall have perhaps received the least attention of all. Publication of the 1601 inventories has allowed several authors to make a numerical analysis of Bess's pictures and this has enabled them to make comparisons between the number of pictures in Bess's collection and those of other patrons.⁶³ Beyond this, such attention as the pictures have received has usually been focussed on individual pieces rather than on the pictures as a whole. Apart from the information contained within the house guide book, only one article has appeared which is concerned with them as a group. In 'Rechristenings at Hardwick', Alastair Laing shows how many of the pictures in the house have been given inaccurate titles which disguise the true identities of the sitters, and that many of these rechristenings occurred in the eighteenth century.⁶⁴ With reference to individual works, the catalogue of the exhibition *Dynasties*, mounted at the Tate Gallery in 1995-6, includes a substantial entry for the Hardwick picture *Ulysses and Penelope*, which was displayed there. In this, Anthony Wells-Cole discusses the history of speculation on the real subject of the painting and the identity of its artist. He also identifies the engraved sources for the design and

⁶² David Collins, 'A 16th-Century Manuscript in Wood: The Eglantine Table at Hardwick Hall', *Early Music*, 4 (1976), 275-9.

⁶³ For example, Elizabeth Goldring, 'An Important Early Picture Collection: The Earl of Pembroke's 1561/62 Inventory and the Provenance of Holbein's "Christina of Denmark"', *Burlington Magazine*, 145 (March 2002), 157-160 (p. 158, n. 8).

⁶⁴ Alastair Laing, 'Rechristenings at Hardwick', *Country Life*, 183 (9 March 1989), 134-5.

suggests that the artist may have been John Balechouse, an employee in Bess's household.⁶⁵ Hardwick's most lavish painting, the full-length picture of Queen Elizabeth I, has been surprisingly overshadowed by more illustrious portraits of the Queen, Roy Strong, for example, being content to deal only with its derivation from a particular woodcut.⁶⁶ Whilst some later authors make passing comment on the picture's symbolism, it has not received detailed iconographic analysis of the type attempted in Chapter Four.⁶⁷ In Chapter Three Bess's pictures are considered as a group rather than as individual pieces. Research in the surviving household accounts and in Bess's inventories preceding that of 1601 enables a detailed analysis of the stages in which the 1601 Hardwick picture collection was acquired, and close consideration of the 1601 inventory itself allows a more precise analysis of how these pictures were deployed around the building.

In Chapter Four this study moves from a consideration of the furnishings as physical objects to a consideration of the subjects depicted upon them and whether they indicate an intentional iconographic scheme at Hardwick. Perhaps because of the traditional preference for discussing 'individual antiques' at Hardwick rather than the 'ensemble', there has been very little attempt to understand themes which might be displayed throughout the whole house. Anthony Wells-Cole has made the most detailed comments on it and it is appropriate to summarise his approach. He observes that, just as the windows

⁶⁵ *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630*, ed. by Karen Hearn (London: Tate Publishing, 1995), p. 101. John Balechouse will be discussed in Chapter Five. Another Hardwick painting mentioned in the 1601 inventory has been displayed recently in the exhibition *Elizabeth* at the National Maritime Museum. The catalogue entry, which is not illustrated, does not add to existing knowledge about the painting. *Elizabeth: The Exhibition at the National Maritime Museum*, ed. by Susan Doran (London: Chatto & Windus, 2003), p. 219.

⁶⁶ Roy Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987; repr. Pimlico, 2003), pp. 148-51.

⁶⁷ For example, Susan Doran, 'Virginity, Divinity and Power: The Portraits of Elizabeth I' in *The Myth of Elizabeth*, ed. by Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 171-199.

increase in size to express the different functions of the house's storeys, so 'the subjects of decoration on these three storeys also differ somewhat in kind'.⁶⁸ On the ground floor, he notes, the armorial overmantel and the nature-inspired forest work tapestries dominated the 'hale'; on the first floor armorial and nature decoration continued but biblical imagery, in the form of tapestries, painted hangings and pictures, predominated; on the state floor nature and the Bible were still in evidence but they were now joined by subjects from classical history and mythology. The first part of Wells-Cole's argument suggests that different kinds of source material are used in different parts of the building but in practice this is less clear-cut since, as his own examples illustrate, biblical, classical and natural elements could appear alongside each other, especially in the state rooms. His inference that classical sources were reserved for the state rooms only, in whatever company they appeared there, is a stronger proposition. The second part of Wells-Cole's argument demonstrates that the whole scheme shifts into an emphasis on the Virtues as a decorative theme, 'exemplifying the qualities that Bess perceived as directing her relations to those with whom she came into contact and, in Charity, her most fundamental attitude towards human relations'. This theme is revealed both implicitly and explicitly across the house. Above all, suggests Wells-Cole, Bess celebrates the qualities of patience and wifely virtue.⁶⁹

As noted above, Sara French disagrees with his conclusions, especially his 'summation of Bess's motives at Hardwick'.⁷⁰ She considers that Wells-Cole has been overly selective in his choice of items discussed, an opinion with which the current author concurs, and further suggests that Bess 'did not have a classical education, and probably did not subscribe to the sophisticated ideas Wells-Cole

⁶⁸ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 289.

⁶⁹ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 289-90.

⁷⁰ French, 'Women, Space and Power', p. 243.

suggests', a conclusion which will be discussed briefly here in Chapter Five.⁷¹ In response to Wells-Cole's apparent neglect of the heraldic decoration, French's own very brief consideration of the overall decorative scheme concentrates on the heraldry, a subject which is also treated here in Chapter Four, and concludes that it is the celebration of Bess and her dynasty which provides the real motive for Bess's decoration of Hardwick.⁷² The theme of dynastic ambition has also been followed by authors such as Mark Girouard and Jean Wilson, who are amongst those who make generalised claims that the decoration of part, at least, of the Hall reveals Bess's intention to create a royal palace for a future Queen Arbella, and Wilson joins David Durant and others in observing that Hardwick was to serve as 'the ancestral location of the Cavendishes'.⁷³

It is the degree of generalisation which creates the opportunity for a more detailed discussion of the decoration of Hardwick Hall. The approach here is to make detailed analyses of the messages contained within individual pieces of furnishings or decoration and to group these under various themes. The distribution of these themes through the house is also considered. This detailed analysis leads to interpretations which may differ from those of earlier commentators and allows a more comprehensive presentation of the original decorative scheme, its components and its intentions.

The concluding chapter returns to the theme of the dual nature of the original furnishings and decoration of Hardwick Hall. It summarises the evidence of the preceding chapters and reviews it in the context of Bess of Hardwick as a patron, her opportunities, resources and motivation. Discussion includes

⁷¹ French, 'Women, Space and Power', p. 243.

⁷² French, 'Women, Space and Power', pp. 241-8.

⁷³ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 15; Jean Wilson, 'Why Fotheringhay? The Location of the Trial and Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots', *Renaissance Journal*, 2 (2004), 3-27 (pp. 20-1); Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 198.

consideration of her finances, her education, her choice of architect, her social networks, and her access to images and to intellectual ideas. It concludes that, despite Bess's intellectual, artistic and social influences and resources, the building and furnishing of Hardwick represented only a modest investment by her but, in return for this economic and prudent expenditure, Bess was able to make considerable statements about her worldly concerns and interests.

This study begins with a consideration of the social architecture of Hardwick Hall.

Chapter Two

The Social Architecture of Hardwick Hall

The architecture of Hardwick Hall (illustration 1) has been the subject of written comment since at least 1610, when the second edition of Camden's *Britannia* noted 'two goodly houses joining in a maner one to the other, which by reason of their lofty situation shew themselves, a farre off to be seene, and yield a very goodly prospect'.¹ Writers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were much stirred by the house's apparent associations with the romance of Mary, Queen of Scots, but most responded still to the sense of grandeur and magnificence to be found in architecture and setting: 'but for the newer [house] – it astonish'd me! Such lofty magnificence! [...] One of the proudest piles I ever beheld.'² Another author could even refer to the house as 'Hardwick, another escorial'.³ In the modern, more taxonomic age, the symmetry, the glass, the transverse hall, the relationship between the external size of the windows and the social importance of the internal rooms, and the association with Robert Smythson, have earned for Hardwick Hall a place in every text book and gazetteer of English architecture. Most recently, the Hall has received analysis within the feminist tradition from Sara French, who considers the ways in which the gender of the patron affected the building from conception to assertive statement.⁴ Her work has been discussed above in Chapter One.

¹ Quoted in Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 13.

² *The Torrington Diaries*, ed. by C. Bruyn Andrews, abridged edn (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1954), p. 173. Lord Torrington's remarks were made in 1789.

³ Daniel and Samuel Lysons, *Magna Britannia*, 6 vols (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, (1806-22), v (1817), p. lxii. They refer to a manuscript by Philip Kinder.

⁴ French, 'Women, Space and Power'.

The most eloquent of these discussions of Hardwick Hall is the treatment by Mark Girouard in *Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House*, which combines academic acumen with personal association with the building. He observes of the exterior of the house that it can

with perfect truth be called a house of great and romantic beauty, or a ruthless, admirable and uncompromising design: a perpetual delight, so simple it is, so ingenious, so obvious, so effective, as one walks round and watches the masses group and regroup, contract and spread out, advance and fall away, shifting from the full weight and splendour of the main elevations to the view from the side, when the house shuts up narrow and bears down with the race and speed of a ship in full sail.⁵

Of all great Elizabethan houses, he concludes, ‘none is more daring or more beautiful than Hardwick’.⁶

It is not the intention here to add to the already substantial literature on the exterior architecture of Hardwick Hall, its origins or its relation to other contemporary buildings. Instead, this chapter will concentrate on the interior layout of the building and the social implications of this organisation of space. The chapter serves, therefore, as an introduction to the more detailed discussion of the furnishings and decoration of Hardwick New Hall which follows in Chapters Three and Four.

⁵ Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, pp. 149-52.

⁶ Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, p. 162.

The Layout of Hardwick New Hall

Unlike Bess's earlier buildings at Chatsworth and Hardwick Old Hall, the layout of Hardwick New Hall is still readily apparent as the building has been relatively unaltered.⁷ It is, of course, unrealistic to suppose that a house which never went completely out of occupation by the family would have survived entirely in its Elizabethan format but the structural changes are not too significant and have not, on the whole, obliterated the evidence of what went before. It is unnecessary, therefore, to spend time here establishing the plan of the house in 1601, as this has been done in several previous publications, although consensus has still to be reached.⁸

The documentary evidence for building activities at Hardwick after Bess has been surveyed by Ben Cowell in a series of unpublished reports for the National Trust.⁹ Although the records have not survived in a complete series, the accounts show on-going repair, renewal and the movement of furniture and fittings to suit the tastes of the time, but these alterations seem always to have been undertaken in a spirit of respect for the old house. Only two periods of work may be described as invasive and those were not seriously destructive of the fabric. In the late seventeenth century the 4th Earl and, from 1694, 1st Duke of Devonshire required William Talman, the architect he employed to rebuild

⁷ Discussion of the layout of Chatsworth is beyond the scope of this chapter. Girouard, 'Elizabethan Chatsworth', provides a brief account of the layout in 1601. Using this material and the earlier inventory of Chatsworth, c. 1560s, which appears here as Appendix Three, it is also possible to suggest the arrangement of Bess's original Chatsworth before the addition of the second floor in the 1570s. I hope to return to this material in the future.

⁸ Compare, for example, the versions in *Of Household Stuff*, pp. 66-7; Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, pp. 48-9; and Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 2*, pp. lxv, lxvii, lxix and lxxi.

⁹ Ben Cowell, *Hardwick Hall: An Archival Survey*, 4 parts (unpublished report for the National Trust, 1997-8). I am grateful to Andrew Barber of the National Trust for permission to refer to this report.

Chatsworth, to do some remodelling of the rooms at either end of the first floor.¹⁰ This created 'opposite and matching apartments, consisting of withdrawing chamber, bedchamber and closet or cabinet on the formal French model then in mode'.¹¹ Much of this work, such as the contemporary woodwork which survives in these areas, was cosmetic and it did not make any major alteration to the layout of the rooms. Work undertaken by John Carr of York a century later for the 5th Duke and his Duchess, Georgiana, was mostly concerned with renovations, such as the replastering of ceilings and the provision of some new fireplaces, and, again, did not overly affect the layout of rooms, with the exception of the chapel, which was divided into two rooms in the period between 1792 and 1800 by the insertion of a new floor at first floor level.¹² The early twentieth century brought improvements of a practical nature, such as bathrooms, and new heating, water and sanitation systems, but the desire to preserve the historic integrity of the architecture was by then firmly established.¹³ The archival evidence for works at the New Hall is complemented by the evidence of the standing structure and it is to be hoped that the research by Nicholas Cooper and others in this field will soon be available to augment the documentary survey.¹⁴

It is appropriate to note here the survival amongst Smythson's drawings of a work which seems to present an alternative ground floor plan for Hardwick (illustration 2).¹⁵ Had it been adopted, this plan would have given the Hall, at least at ground floor level, a much greater regard for interior symmetry with almost

¹⁰ Cowell, *Hardwick Hall 1607-1707: An Archival Survey*, p. 10.

¹¹ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 39.

¹² The documentary evidence relating to Carr's work at Hardwick is detailed in Cowell, *Hardwick Hall, 1707-1811: An Archival Survey*, pp. 7-16.

¹³ Cowell, *Hardwick Hall, 1891-1956: An Archival Survey*, *passim*.

¹⁴ It would be an interesting exercise, but one which lies outside the scope of this study, to apply the room names supplied by the later Hardwick inventories of 1764, 1792 and 1811 to the ground plan.

¹⁵ Girouard, 'The Smythson Collection', pp. 31 and 71; Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, pp. 147-8.

exact correspondence between the north and south ends of the building, exemplified by the use of matching great stairs at either side of the hall. The loggias are missing on this plan, whilst the towers seem to be smaller and the whole length of the building greater. The drawing does not make any allocation of function to rooms which, with the exception of the hall, could be completely interchangeable. There is no inherent reason why the plan should not have been adopted as it stood nor any clear evidence for why it was changed. However, Bess was an experienced and knowledgeable builder, as well as a strong-minded and participative patron, and it is a reasonable conclusion that her aesthetic taste, allied perhaps to her sense of practicality, led to the changes. The addition of loggias, for example, may be considered a choice based on a sense of fashion or taste, whilst the rearrangement of rooms might owe more to domestic practicality.¹⁶ As the Smythson drawing, in a manner typical of a contemporary 'platt', offered only a ground floor, it is possible that the perceived problems lay on the upper floors. It is not difficult to imagine that the rigour of the proposed plan's symmetry would have proved too much for the reality of aristocratic living. It is still, however, very easy to see the relationship between the shape and layout of this putative house and Hardwick Hall as built.¹⁷

As the layout of Hardwick Hall is so well known, illustrations 3 – 6 merely give a summary of the principal rooms on each floor. The outlines are taken from the plans published in *Of Houshold Stuff* but a different numbering

¹⁶ For a discussion of the contemporary fashion for loggias see Paula Henderson, 'Escape from Formality in the Sixteenth-Century English Country House', in *Architecture et Vie Sociale: L'organisation intérieure des grandes demeures à la fin du moyen âge et à la Renaissance*, ed. by Jean Guillaume (Paris: Picard, 1994), 269-77 (p. 273). Burghley, Theobalds, Holdenby, Gorhambury and Wimbledon were all built with loggias in the 1570s and 1580s.

¹⁷ The relationship between the shape of the building projected in this drawing and the shape of Worksop has received less comment but suggests a strong developmental link between Worksop and Hardwick which could be explored in more detail. The plan of Worksop is illustrated in Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, p. 111.

system has been applied for clarity and brevity.¹⁸ The editor of that work observes that the partition walls are shown in their modern places with certain exceptions on the second and third floors, but some alterations have been made here where the later partitions are obviously inappropriate. For example, alterations at the northern end of the house at first floor level have caused some changes to the layout there. 'Tobies Chamber' originally took up the entire space of the north turret, which is now split to accommodate the Cut Velvet Dressing Room, part of a corridor, a lavatory and a bathroom. The original layout has been reflected in the illustration.

Before discussion of this layout can take place, it is necessary to note the obvious fact that Hardwick New Hall was not the only house on the site. Bess was also involved in work at the Old Hall, where building activity had been taking place for several years before the start of the programme at the New Hall. However, as will be seen, Bess did not abandon her work at the Old Hall when the New Hall was started and the two houses came to completion and were used together. Although this study is primarily concerned with arrangements at the New Hall, it is necessary to consider the layout at the Old Hall in order to understand how the social architectures of the two houses complemented each other.

The Layout of Hardwick Old Hall

Despite the presence of substantial standing remains (illustration 7), the layout of Hardwick Old Hall remains tantalisingly difficult to deduce. As

¹⁸ In *Of Household Stuff* the numbering on the plan refers to the numbering of the rooms in the main text of the inventory. The editor attempts to identify every space and has continuous numbering across four floors of the house. Here it is the intention for brevity only to identify the principal spaces and for clarity to illustrate each floor separately. See also note 8 above.

Girouard observes, 'much of [...] the planning cannot be accurately ascertained, owing to partial demolition'.¹⁹ However, it is possible to make some suggestions using the surviving structure, the 1601 inventory, the building accounts and the one depiction of the Hall in the seventeenth century, but these conclusions are far from exact or completely satisfying. As no analysis of the layout of the Old Hall above ground level has been published, it is necessary to make a much closer survey of the evidence than was needed in order to illustrate the layout of the New Hall, and to take a more detailed, step-by-step approach to suggesting the organisation of space in the earlier house.

At the New Hall, where survival of the building allows close comparison with the text, the inventory clerk took a logical tour of the house. He started at the top of the house and then worked across each storey before descending to the next. It is a reasonable assumption that a similar method would have been applied at the Old Hall, although it seems that here he returned to the attics having worked down to the ground floor. To some extent, therefore, it may be taken as a starting point that rooms listed next to each other in the inventory probably had some physical proximity but it is still necessary to interpret where the clerk descended the stairs to a lower floor. The inventory also makes a few concessions to location in its room names, for example the 'Chamber at the Forrest great Chamber dore', the 'Chamber at the side of the Forrest greate Chamber' and the 'Corner Chamber over Mr. William Cavendishe's Chamber'.²⁰ The contents of the rooms listed in the inventory rarely help to locate each room but are obviously important in suggesting relative importance.

¹⁹ Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, p. 145. The Old Hall was partially demolished by the 3rd and 4th Dukes of Devonshire, with the bulk of the work being done in 1757. Lucy Worsley, *Hardwick Old Hall* (London: English Heritage, 1998), p. 34.

²⁰ *Of Household Stuff*, pp. 34-6.

The building accounts offer useful information, generally through the features whose creation they record but also occasionally through descriptive names for rooms and by phrases used to locate pieces of work. These accounts do not survive in their entirety but what must be considered as a large proportion of them were collected and bound together in the nineteenth century and are now housed in the archives at Chatsworth.²¹ These accounts were used by Basil Stallybrass in his 1913 article on Bess's building works but remained unpublished until the 1980s.²² They have subsequently informed many other studies of great house building at this time.²³

Although the Old Hall was frequently depicted in its romanticised, dilapidated state, there is very little evidence of its prelapsarian appearance. One seventeenth-century picture is known (illustration 8) and this was found in a scrap book at Audley End. From these materials it is possible to make general comments about the layout of rooms in the Old Hall but the conclusions must always be partial and open to much discussion.

The intention here is to picture the Old Hall layout in 1601 but it is apparent from both the physical and documentary evidence that the Old Hall, unlike its neighbour, was not the result of one building programme and was not, therefore, conceived as a coherent whole. The sequence of building was described by Basil Stallybrass and reviewed in more detail by David Durant in his

²¹ Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick MS 6. This is a substantial bound volume and does not appear to have any particularly obvious gaps in the information it provides. However, some relevant papers have been separated from the main volume, either remaining as single papers in the Chatsworth archive or removed to other archives. This must raise the possibility of other material which has either been lost or survives unidentified.

²² Stallybrass, 'Bess of Hardwick's Buildings and Building Accounts', pp. 347-98; Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall*. Riden's introduction to *Part 1* (pp. xxix-xxxiv) describes the manuscript and the transcription project carried out by members of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of University College, Cardiff, in detail.

²³ For example, Airs, *The Tudor & Jacobean Country House*.

introduction to the published building accounts.²⁴ In brief, according to Durant's interpretation of the accounts, Bess's brother, James, undertook some work to the smaller house of their childhood before his death in the early 1580s, perhaps concentrating on the central hall area.²⁵ Bess took possession of the house in 1584 and three years later paid for work on the east wing, either as a new project or completing her brother's scheme, which brought that wing to a roofed height of three storeys. In 1588 the new four-storey west wing was completed and alterations were made to raise the central block. In the following summer a new, fourth storey was added to the east wing, raising that to the same height as the central and western parts of the building and making necessary significant structural alterations to parts of the lower structure. At the same time the south-eastern staircase was constructed in the angle between the main block of the house and the east wing.²⁶ This sequence is summarised in illustration 9, taken from Stallybrass's article and subsequently reproduced by Durant. Many questions still arise concerning the building chronology but they need not interfere with the process of deducing the internal plan of the house in 1601.

In the discussion of the Old Hall which follows, the illustrations are based on the plan of the remains of the ground floor published in the English Heritage guide book (illustration 10).²⁷ Conjectural walls are given in the English Heritage plan as double dashed lines. This author's conjectured walls and partitions are

²⁴ Stallybrass, 'Bess of Hardwick's Buildings and Building Accounts', fig. 1 and pp. 360-79; Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 1*, pp. xi-xxviii. The building chronology is also considered in French, 'Women, Space and Power', pp. 177-84.

²⁵ French, 'Women, Space and Power', pp. 49-51, provides some generalised speculation on the childhood house of James and Bess but there is little firm evidence on which to base an opinion.

²⁶ Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 1*, pp. xiv-xix.

²⁷ Worsley, *Hardwick Old Hall*. Unfortunately, in the edition used here, that plan has the direction arrow pointing on the wrong bearing. This has been corrected in the illustration and all the directional descriptions of parts of the building are given in the accurate form. The guide book also contains a 'cut-away reconstruction drawing [...] of how the house may have looked in the early seventeenth century' but, as Sara French observes (p. 177), this contains 'glaring inaccuracies'.

given as single thin continuous lines. The above-ground major walls are derived from the walls at ground level, with some alterations where standing evidence remains, but many of the doorways are only conjectural. All these new openings and divisions are given as suggestions suitable for a general consideration of the organisation of space, which is the purpose here, rather than as minutely observed and accurate statements. The floor plans are therefore offered as the basis for discussion.

The plan of the Old Hall at ground level immediately reveals the problems of making a new house in a piecemeal fashion. Whilst the western parts of the plan have a certain axial homogeneity, the eastern part, from the eastern wall of the Hall onwards, does not. The end block is markedly divergent from the line of the rest of the building. This creates a number of interesting issues concerning the nature and subsequent re-use of an earlier building, some of which could be addressed from the standing remains. However, the most interesting question is how the builders treated the area in which the divergent planes of the building would have collided along the main, north front, the area demolished in the middle of the eighteenth century. Archaeological exploration of this area should theoretically provide the best information but this appears not to have been pursued and would, potentially, be limited by the thoroughness of the removal of materials after demolition. Instead, evidence must be taken from the Audley End drawing. This image is always slightly problematic because of its peculiar perspective, which is most obvious in its treatment of the courtyard wall between the lodges in front of the Old Hall. The artist has also contrived to remove the different angle of the eastern end of the building, but his treatment of the basic blocks of the house and their relationship to each other need not be discounted

although it must be treated cautiously. The drawing shows that the north-east block of the building projected beyond the main line of the house, as may be seen from the difference in the levels of the balustrades and from the corner dressings of both sides of the tower (illustration 11). The next section appears to be flush with the main front although, infuriatingly, ground level is obscured by the east lodge and the courtyard wall. As will be seen in the following illustrations, a solution has been found which allows the corner tower to project, whilst leaving the next block only slightly out of true with the main front, which seems to suit many of the wing's angles and the Audley End drawing. However, as a further complication, it may be noted that the Audley End drawing shows the east face of the north-east block to have one large window, whereas the standing remains show an extension of that face of the tower with small windows (illustration 12). This part of the wall has obviously been bonded to an earlier wall. As may be seen from the ground plan, without this extension the tower cannot project beyond the front of the house and so the Audley End drawing is impossible.

There remain questions, therefore, about the exact nature of the building in this area but these doubts need not impede general comments about the layout of rooms within the structure. It is clear that the house should be considered as being divided into five main blocks, the dividing walls running more or less north-south. The remaining walls toward the western end of the building still show this. These divisions make it clear that no use was made of the substantial length of the house, as it would be on the second floor of the later Hall, which has implications for the degree of grandeur which could be achieved.

The stateliest rooms of the Old Hall were at the top of the house, bounded on the east by the 'Forest great Chamber' and on the west by the 'Hill great

Chamber'.²⁸ These rooms are still identifiable in the ruins. The inventory lists seven rooms between these two great chambers and one other which is obviously associated with the former chamber.²⁹ The layout of this floor may therefore be suggested as shown in illustration 13. The positions of the two great chambers and the two stairs are definite, whilst the positions of the other rooms are conjectural, based on the inventory order, furnishings and the provision of windows. A landing at the top of the east stairs has been assumed for practical reasons. This arrangement allows for a customary disposition of rooms in the eastern end of the floor, the 'Forest great Chamber' leading to a withdrawing room, with the bedroom and small inner bedroom beyond. The 'Chamber at the Forrest great Chamber dore', which may be shown from its contents to be an impressive room, has a discrete nature, emphasised by the way in which the inventory describes it first, before advancing to the suite of rooms associated with the great chamber.³⁰ The best lodgings, placed centrally above the hall, are slightly less clear-cut. The inventory shows that they consist of two main rooms and an inner room, and that there is an almost empty 'Gallerie by the best lodging'.³¹ The plan shows that there are three spaces to accommodate these rooms. The presence of a central door, now blocked, in the standing remains of the western wall of the section here numbered 6, seems to suggest a simple division of this area into two rooms, one facing north and one south, but it is possible that one space could have been subdivided. This leaves the space numbered 7 to be the 'Inner Chamber to the best lodging', although its long thin shape (approximately 14 metres x 4.7 metres) is ungainly for this purpose. It seems more suitable for a gallery, albeit a rather

²⁸ Although the chambers had acquired these names by 1601, the building accounts in the preceding decade usually refer to them as the east and west great chambers.

²⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 34-6.

³⁰ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 34.

³¹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 36.

under-furnished one, but this would only work if all three of the rooms of the best lodging were placed within area 6, which would significantly limit their impressiveness. It seems more likely that the inventory clerk applied the name 'Gallerie by the best lodging' to the space labelled 8, otherwise unaccounted for, which is really a landing for the house's secondary stairs.³² If so, this is an interesting use of the word 'gallery'. The termination of the range in the 'Hill great Chamber' is a pleasant certainty.

The next floor down is more markedly polarised into rooms associated with the upper gentlemen of the household at the western end of the building and Bess's own lodgings to the east. Illustration 14 shows a possible interpretation of these rooms. The building accounts make it clear that the two western corner chambers and their inner rooms were originally planned for other members of the family or household, that over William's chamber being for his brother, Charles Cavendish, and the other, at the front of the house, for Mr. Owens, no doubt another significant gentleman of the household.³³ By 1601, they presumably no longer required accommodation and the rooms, as their contents show, had become lodgings of good, although not splendid, quality, comparable to the rooms of the named gentlemen, Mr. Manners and Mr. Fortescue.³⁴ Durant makes the

³² There is a small passage behind the stairs at the south end which gives discreet access from area 7 to the 'Hill great Chamber'. There is no mention of this in the inventory, presumably because it was too small to have any furnishings. There is certainly no reason to assume that it should be identified with the 'Gallerie by the best lodging', which contained two elaborately covered forms and a stool, and was wainscoted to the ceiling.

³³ Hardwick MS 6, fol. 237^v. According to the 1601 Chatsworth inventory, Mr. Owens had an insignificant room on the ground floor there (*Of Household Stuff*, p. 27). The editor identifies this man with Owen, one of Bess's grooms, against whom George Talbot had grievances in 1577, although this identification may be a little tenuous. The dispute is recounted in Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 99.

³⁴ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 36. Whilst it is not certain exactly who this Mr. Manners was, Bess had a long association with the Manners family in both its Belvoir Castle and Haddon Hall branches, and could reasonably have been served by any of its scions. He could even have been a relation, as Bess's grand-daughter, Grace Pierrepont, married George Manners of Haddon Hall in the 1570s. Mr. Fortescue's identity is rather more doubtful as he does not appear widely in the documentary record, although the family name is obviously not unknown at that time.

suggestion that, given the paucity of furnishings in 'Mr William Cavendishes Chamber' on the floor below – it is furnished only with 'a borde' – he may have occupied one of these bed chambers, although by 1601 he had both his own house at Oldcotes and a reasonably furnished chamber on the ground floor of the New Hall.³⁵

Bess's end of this second floor is less straightforward. The inventory lists five rooms which need to be placed here: 'My Ladies Chamber', its inner chamber, the 'sceeled Chamber next my Ladies with drawing Chamber', 'my Ladies withdrawing Chamber' and the 'long gallerie'.³⁶ This last room is the most difficult to visualise because the proportions of the available space do not obviously suggest length. However, the building accounts record several items which may help to place it. A reference to 'the half pace in the stears at the old galarye end' makes an obvious association between the gallery and the stairs.³⁷ There are also frequent references to a turret at the old gallery end, which is certainly visible in the Audley End drawing (illustration 11), and although the perspective makes its exact position unclear it is likely that this was the continuation of the stair well above roof level to give access to the rooftop walks.³⁸ These two references seem to place the 'long gallerie' either directly to the north of the stairs or just to the east of that position. One further reference may help to pinpoint it. There are several references to a carved balustrade over the old gallery but one payment refers specifically to 'hewing 15 dubble balasters for the

³⁵ Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 1*, p. xviii; Kettle, *Oldcotes*, pp. 13-32; *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 39 and 55.

³⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 38.

³⁷ Hardwick MS 6 fol. 183^v; Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 2*, p. 195.

³⁸ For example, Hardwick MS 6, fols 114 and 182^v. No part of this turret survives. In theory, if it were the continuation of the stairs this should clash with the known gable effect on the south façade. However, the effective, if ungraceful, example of the surviving turret above the western stairs and its collision with a gable should perhaps warn us against too many scruples.

east syde of the olde galarye'.³⁹ This balustrade is suggested in the Audley End drawing and was obviously used to mark the division between the eastern block with its flat roof and parapet, and the central block with its sloped roof and gables. For this balustrade to be above the gallery's east side, the bulk of the gallery must have been to the west. This position seems unsatisfactory as the room would have been lit from one end only and is not particularly long. However, it is known that this part of the house was completed and roofed to the level of the gallery in 1587 but that two years later Bess returned to alter the wing by adding a new fourth floor and, according to Durant, constructing a new stair 'in the gap between the wing and the old main block, superseding the one it was built alongside'.⁴⁰ This must have made a significant difference to the southern end of the gallery. Although it is unclear whether the gallery would originally have stopped level with the southern façade of the western block or, the less likely alternative, have continued back to the outer wall of the later stairs, the arrival of those stairs must have removed the light from the gallery's southern end and taken some of its length, at least by the width of the landing which has reasonably been postulated. It seems, therefore, that the work to aggrandise the building by adding the new great chamber and lodgings on the floor above was achieved at the cost of the gallery. As Bess's existing galleries at Chatsworth and future gallery at Hardwick New Hall show, she was aware of the possibilities of such a room and the diminution of this gallery must have been disheartening, although the room can never have been entirely satisfactory by comparison with her earlier work and the

³⁹ Hardwick MS 6, fol. 183^v; Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 2*, p. 195.

⁴⁰ Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 1*, pp. xviii-xix. Unfortunately, Durant does not give any references to accounts for the construction of this stair.

work of her contemporaries, especially, perhaps, George Talbot's ostentatious gallery at Worksop.⁴¹

It is clear from the inventory that the remaining rooms on this floor fall into two groups, Bess's chamber and its inner chamber, and her withdrawing chamber and the 'Chamber next my Ladies with drawing Chamber'. There is little information to place these but it is a reasonable suggestion that the 'withdrawing Chamber' occupied the position numbered 8 on the illustration, with the 'sceeled Chamber next my Ladies with drawing Chamber' obviously alongside. The exact position of this latter chamber may possibly be pinpointed in relation to the floor below by a slightly confusing record in the accounts for 1591, which notes a payment 'To William Bromley in full payment for selinge of my ladies withdrawinge chamber [...] and for on other Rowme of the third story over my ladies bedd chamber next unto the great withdrawinge Chamber of the north side of the house'.⁴² Initially this seems like a clue to locating rooms on the floors above but once it is considered that Bess's bed chamber is in fact her old room on the second storey, discussed below, the real location may be revealed. Bess's old chamber had an outer rather than an inner chamber attached to it, which seems to suggest the layout given below. Once the old chamber has been fixed, the 'sceeled Chamber' may be placed above it. The remaining space on this third storey could then be Bess's own chamber with its inner chamber, which may have been little

⁴¹ Girouard, 'Elizabethan Chatsworth', p. 1669. The Chatsworth inventory of the 1560s (Appendix Three) suggests that Bess's earlier house did not have any galleries and they were therefore only added with the rebuilding of the 1570s, when such a room might have been considered indispensable in an aristocratic house of any pretension. Rosalys Coope, 'The "Long Gallery": Its Origins, Development, Use and Decoration', *Architectural History*, 29 (1986), 43-84 (p. 54) refers to a skied gallery at Chatsworth as early as 1551 but this is based on a misinterpretation of Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, p. 117, where the gallery and the date of 1551 are both mentioned but not in conjunction. However, Girouard did not make use of the inventory of the 1560s and therefore does not comment on the lack of galleries at that date. This emphasises some of the important deductions to be drawn from the inventory of the 1560s to which, as noted earlier, I hope to return in the future.

⁴² Hardwick MS 6, fol. 221; Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 1*, p. 149.

more than a closet. Certainly the inventory description suggests that it is used for storage and it is possible to imagine that it was originally designed to house a close stool.⁴³ The apparent lack of defined purpose for the ‘sceeled Chamber next my Ladies with drawing Chamber’, which is not helped by the fact that it has obviously been emptied of furniture, becomes a little clearer if it is noted that this was originally intended to be the top floor of the house on this side, with formal state rooms. The large room in the south-east corner could have been intended as a great chamber, from which a withdrawing chamber could open, itself leading to the privacy of the bed chamber and its inner room. The inventory shows that both outer rooms have been denuded, presumably to furnish rooms in the New Hall, but they are panelled to their full height, which suggests some degree of quality.⁴⁴ When the fourth floor was added this floor must have been downgraded.

The two lower floors may be considered more briefly. A suggestion for the first floor appears as illustration 15. This storey seems relatively uncomplicated although some form of passage probably needs to be considered to give access to ‘Mrs Knyvetons Chamber’, which is here numbered 5.⁴⁵ The western part of the ground floor, which contained service areas concerned with the provision of food, is readily identifiable from the surviving structure but as it is partially sunken below ground level it allows for some mezzanine rooms. One room, the ‘Chamber by the Court side’ is probably one of these and it has not been possible to show it on the plan, although it was on the north-west front of the house. The eastern part of the building contained a number of chambers giving simple accommodation for lower status members of the household. This is summarised in illustration 16.

⁴³ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 38.

⁴⁴ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 38.

⁴⁵ Jane Kniveton, née Leche, was Bess’s half-sister and a permanent member of her household. She had rooms in both Hardwick Halls and at Chatsworth in 1601.

At the very end of the inventory the clerk returned to the top of the house and listed 'a Chamber in the turret' and six other chambers there. The turret is probably the one turret at the top of the south-eastern stairs and the six other rooms could conveniently be attic rooms in the gables above the centre block of the house. The inventory had already started with four similarly practical rooms, 'the wardrop', 'the utter roome to the Wardrop', 'the lowe wardrop' and 'the Chamber at the lowe wardrop dore', which would probably have fitted into the topmost rooms above the north-eastern part of the house, taking up the space alongside the upper part of the very high 'Forest great Chamber', to which the clerk turned next.⁴⁶

Durant has described the Old Hall in 1588, before the addition of the top floor of the east wing, as 'a house which was extraordinarily inconvenient and a plan which no contemporary would have admired'.⁴⁷ Even after the addition of the extra floor the extraordinary inconvenience is undeniable, especially in the western block, but a contemporary, whilst not perhaps impressed by the organisation of space, would undoubtedly have understood the principles behind it. It is not difficult, however, to imagine why Bess took the opportunity to build the New Hall from scratch in 1590.

The Social Organisation of Space at Hardwick

Although the 1601 inventory, the building accounts, household accounts and the surviving structures and furnishings supply a great deal of information about Hardwick, there is little contemporary evidence about how people actually conducted their affairs in the rooms of Hardwick Hall. There are no ordinances of

⁴⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 34.

⁴⁷ Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 1*, p. xvii.

the kind that survive for Wollaton and other households which so graphically illustrate the regulation of a great establishment, and which Alice Friedman has described as supporting 'the notion that ritual and ceremony successfully mediated the tensions between individuals by reinforcing rank and status'.⁴⁸ Only a very few clues are to be found in other documentation. A memorandum signed by Bess 'in a Chamber of the last newe buylded house at Hardwick comonlye called the Wthdrawing Chamber' suggests a place where she undertook business.⁴⁹ In a statement to Burghley in 1592, Bess confirmed that her grand-daughter, Arbella Stuart, was kept under close observation and 'lieth in my bedchamber', referring presumably to her accommodation at the Old Hall, although the practice seems to have continued after the move to the New Hall in 1597.⁵⁰ Sir Henry Bronker, the commissioner sent to Hardwick to enquire into Arbella's affairs in 1603, was received in the Long Gallery, where he spoke with Bess and interrogated Arbella, having first withdrawn with her to the other end of the gallery so as not to be overheard.⁵¹ In her subsequent extraordinarily troubled letter of justification to Bronker, Arbella surprisingly mentions two trivial domestic details. She recalls that she and her cousin Mary 'walkd in the great chamber, for feare of wearing the mattes in the Gallery (reserved for you Courtyers)' and that she 'went up to the great chamber and theare I found a troupe of (for my sake) malcontents takeing the advantage of the fire to warme them

⁴⁸ Friedman, *House and Household*, p. 43. The regulations for Wollaton, which were transcribed in the eighteenth century from a manuscript which has now been lost, are reproduced in full on pp. 185-7. For household ordinances and regulations in general, Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, pp. 82-3.

⁴⁹ Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Un-numbered document found in box labelled 'Hardwick Drawers 337', probably belonging with item 35 in box marked 'Bess and Earls Misc. I'.

⁵⁰ Durant, *Arbella Stuart*, p. 72.

⁵¹ Durant, *Arbella Stuart*, pp. 99-100.

by'.⁵² Players are known to have performed at Hardwick and yet there are no details of where they played or in what circumstances.⁵³ Perhaps most frustratingly, there is nothing to illustrate the only occasion on which Bess is known to have entertained a fellow aristocrat at Hardwick, when George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland, and his brother, Francis, were received there in the summer of 1605.⁵⁴ With only such scanty fragments of evidence remaining, analysis of the organisation of space within Hardwick Hall can only be based on analogy and common sense.

The surviving accounts do permit some knowledge of the size of Bess's household. Although not constant in number, this varied between thirty and forty people based at Hardwick, with other people employed as a skeleton staff at Chatsworth. Girouard has written that 'Hardwick, like other grand Elizabethan households, was organised like a little court. At the centre was Bess herself and round her radiated three concentric circles: her own immediate family, the upper servants, and the lower servants.'⁵⁵ In Bess's household the divisions in the upper part of the hierarchy were a little blurred, as several of her closest gentlewomen were also family members, including her half-sister, Jane Kniveton, née Leche, and her niece, Elizabeth Digby, née Slater or Slaughter, daughter of another half-

⁵² *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart*, pp. 151 and 153. This letter, written by a deeply troubled woman at a time of considerable crisis, is very difficult to understand but falls occasionally into these commonplaces amongst the stream of consciousness.

⁵³ The Queen's Men played in the New Hall in 1600, the Old Hall in 1596 and at Chatsworth in 1593. Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 79-80, reasonably assume by reference to contemporary practice that the performance at Hardwick New Hall in 1600 took place in the 'high great Chamber' but there is nothing specific about a venue in the surviving records. There are also several references in the accounts to payments for musicians.

⁵⁴ *A Calendar of the Shrewsbury and Talbot Papers in Lambeth Palace Library and the College of Arms*, ed. by Catherine Jamison, E.G.W. Bill and G.R. Batho, 2 vols (London: HMSO, 1966 and 1971), II, ed. by G.R. Batho (1971), p. 278, (vol. M, fol. 280) contains a letter of 29 July 1605 in which it is noted that the Cliffords had been greatly entertained at Hardwick. Beyond the purchase of quantities of fish 'bought against the Earle of Cumberlands Cominge', which were not apparently paid for until the following March (Hardwick MS 10b, fol. 73^v), this visit seems to have made no further impact on the surviving records. It is likely that it was connected with a land deal.

⁵⁵ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 29.

sister, Margaret. In assessing the composition of the household from the surviving records it is sometimes difficult to be certain about whether some of the gentlemen belonged to Bess herself or to William Cavendish, her son, but it is certain that they were physically present amongst those who worked and were accommodated at Hardwick. In addition to the lower indoor servants, there would have been times at which the company was swelled by the outside workers, eating in the hall, for example, and by the servants of visitors. Overall, this was not a particularly large household but it had to operate within appropriate social codes, which were reflected in the divisions of space within the house.

The visit of the Earl of Cumberland in 1605 should have provided the very occasion for which the whole interior of Hardwick Hall was designed. The backbone of the layout is a processional route which leads from ground level to the formal receiving rooms on the second floor. It is this route which gives structure to the house and everything else, it could be argued, is merely fitted round it. The route is essentially from the Hall, by way of the great stairs unrolling on the south side of the house (illustration 17), to the suite of rooms containing the 'high great Chamber' (illustration 18), the 'with drawing Chamber' beyond leading to the 'best bed Chamber' and its associated service rooms, and the 'Gallerie' alongside taking up the entire eastern half of the floor. The route itself may be considered to have two functions, one concerning food and one people. As Girouard has written, this route 'provided a ceremonial route for what was an essential feature of any grand entertainment, the formal procession of ushers and waiters carrying up each course of a meal'.⁵⁶ The ritual and ceremony of such an event are important in terms of the hospitality and courtesy with which an

⁵⁶ Girouard, *Robert Smythson* p. 156.

aristocratic host should treat his or her guest but also in terms of ways in which the status and importance of an aristocrat could be represented even in his or her absence by inanimate objects – in this case food – which had to be treated as though they embodied the authority of the master.⁵⁷ The arrangement at Hardwick allows the elements from the different parts of the kitchen department on either side of the hall to assemble centrally and then progress through the public area of the hall, where many of the socially inferior would no doubt be gathered at such a time and could be called upon to play their parts as extras in this drama, and so onwards to the ‘high great Chamber’.

The layout of Hardwick as a setting for processions of people is more complicated. It must be assumed that an important visitor, one for whom the whole panoply of ceremony and spectacle might be enacted, needs not merely to arrive but to make an entrance. It is no longer possible to consider a processional route starting in the hall. Instead, it may be suggested that the route began farther away. Hardwick Hall stands on the edge of a scarp and is visible on several sides from a great distance. Such a site, reminiscent of many medieval castles and of contemporary Midland houses such as Wollaton, demands attention both to the architecture of the building and to the audacity of the builder. As William Camden wrote, the Hardwick Halls, ‘by reason of their lofty situation shew themselves, a farre off to be seene, and yeeld a very goodly prospect’.⁵⁸ The sense of ceremony could be said to start from that first goodly prospect. As the visitor approached, the house would move in and out of view just as, once inside the building, the route to the state rooms takes many turns and plays with the idea of whether or not

⁵⁷ Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, pp. 47-51, gives some late medieval examples of these practices.

⁵⁸ William Camden, *Britannia* (1610), quoted in Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 13.

the final goal of the 'high great Chamber' seems to be in or out of the visitor's grasp.

Having reached the house's environs, the visitor is confronted by the gatehouse, which provides another stage in the processional route (illustration 19). Although this should not be considered a defensive feature, it is a clear symbol of the owner's authority, since it permits him or her the ability to grant or deny admission.⁵⁹ The gatehouse also provides a symbolic link with an earlier 'feudal' age and is one of the many ways in which Bess might have wished to draw on the idea of her continuity of authority, either specifically as a member of the Hardwick family at Hardwick or, in her role as Countess of Shrewsbury, as a representative of the old established aristocratic order in a changing society. There is no evidence that the Old Hall ever had a gatehouse, although the addition of the two lodges and a new wall on the north front in the seventeenth century may have destroyed material. At Chatsworth Bess had built not a separate gatehouse but a grand gatehouse tower, integral with the west front of the building, through which the visitor entered the central courtyard. Although different in form, this gatehouse tower served a similar symbolic purpose.

At the gatehouse the greater scale of the approach to Hardwick Hall is restricted as the visitor is forced into its narrow confines in order to enter the courtyard. Once he is there, the vista is reopened to reveal for the first time the whole front of the house but then the route is again diminished as it passes through the small and relatively obscure front door, providing the moment of anticipation before the splendour of the hall opens up inside. Once again, this is part of the process of suspense, even teasing, by which the other world of the

⁵⁹ It is unclear whether the New Hall was ever completely surrounded by walls but it is likely that there was never a complete circuit on the east front of the house. Where there are walls they are not difficult to climb.

great chamber and its delights is kept from the visitor and the sense of drama in the processional route is prolonged.

However, this is also the point at which the route reveals its weaknesses. There is no area in which the important visitor can make the necessary repairs before being received by the mistress of the house. It is a direct route from front door to moment of reception in the great chamber or even, potentially, at some point on the main stairs if the visitor's status demanded special respect from his host. This appears to be a problem of the compact non-courtyard house. At Chatsworth, as at other courtyard houses including Holdenby, the gatehouse range itself offered accommodation before the visitor reached the hall.⁶⁰ Alternatively at Chatsworth, as at Theobalds, there was a parlour at the end of the hall which could give some privacy before the ascent of the stairs to the great chamber.⁶¹ At Wollaton, a strange hybrid mixture between a courtyard and a non-courtyard house, the complex route from entry to great hall meant that the visitor passed a chamber with an inner chamber before even arriving in the public area of the hall.⁶² It may be argued that there were chambers around the southern edge of the ground floor at Hardwick Hall but to pause to visit them is irrevocably to interrupt the sense of ritual and calculated progress inherent in the processional route to the 'high great Chamber'.

The entrance hall at Hardwick has novelty because it is a transverse hall running from front to back of the house instead of across the front parallel to the entrance façade in the traditional manner (illustration 20). This design was

⁶⁰ Mark Girouard, 'Elizabethan Holdenby – I', *Country Life* (1979), pp. 1286-89 (illustration on p. 1287).

⁶¹ John Summerson, 'The Building of Theobalds, 1564-1585', *Archaeologia*, 97 (1959), pp. 107-26 (plate 33).

⁶² Pamela Marshall, *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family* (Nottingham: Nottingham Civic Society, 1999), p. 52.

anticipated at the Old Hall and at the Banqueting House at Holdenby but the latter example was only a small building constructed for entertainment rather than a large house built for all the functions of an aristocratic establishment.⁶³ At Hardwick the vestige of the screens passage remains in the columns supporting the little gallery above (illustration 21) but the new arrangement of the hall means that there is no attempt to disguise the openings to the kitchen and service areas. Indeed, the minimal separation of these areas from the public space of the hall must have rendered them even more intrusive. The traditional arrangement of screens passage and corridor to the kitchen, which may be seen for example at Haddon or Penshurst, offers some small degree of separation for these noisy and smelly areas, but at Hardwick they are distanced only by a wall and a door on each side. It is interesting to note that at the Old Hall the novelty of the transverse hall was not matched with similar invention in its relation to the kitchen and serving areas. These still open indirectly from the hall in one direction but this has become the long side of the hall rather than the traditional short end and it is not clear whether there was any screens passage, however vestigial, to serve as a prelude to the hall.

The proximity of hall and service areas at the New Hall is an illustration of a point that has been noted by Sara French, who writes that 'part of Hardwick's novelty is that it divorces the hall from the *living* spaces of the country house and ties [it] firmly to the *serving* spaces'.⁶⁴ For her, this is part of the argument that Hardwick is a gender-specific house but the decline in the traditional function of

⁶³ Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, pp. 153-4. At Hardwick Old Hall it has been suggested that the hall incorporated the remains of an earlier hall which had been entered on the long east side. When the building was enlarged the area to the east of the hall was built over, removing the original entry and forcing the creation of an entry to the hall on the short, north side. Worsley, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 8.

⁶⁴ French, 'Women, Space and Power', p. 219.

the hall is hardly unique to Bess's house. That the practical function of the hall had been downgraded from its medieval apogee as the heart of the aristocratic household until it might be considered one of the serving areas is undoubted, but there is still an air of tension and compromise in this situation.⁶⁵ In form, the entrance hall at Hardwick is still a large space calculated to impress the visitor by its size, a reaction intensified by his having been first channelled through the smaller and more enclosed space of the loggia and entrance door.⁶⁶ The hall's decoration also emphasises the power of the owner, in part through the choice of tapestries, which will be discussed in the next chapter, but primarily through the great plaster overmantel of Bess's family arms, to be discussed in Chapter Four, which renders the mistress of the house symbolically present even *in absentia*. There is considerable ambivalence, then, in a room which must serve both as a focus for the lower part of the household hierarchy, who would, amongst other things, have eaten there, and as the first interior space in an impressive route leading to the most formal and stately rooms of the second floor.

The grouping of these rooms on the second floor at Hardwick follows the pattern which had become customary in houses of pretension. The great chamber, withdrawing chamber and bedroom, often with a gallery nearby, had become the standard block of lodgings for a person of quality, capable of repetition within a building according to the status of the owner or his expectation of magnificent, even royal, visitors.⁶⁷ These rooms at Hardwick provide such a straightforward and effective example of the style that it is difficult to make further comment on

⁶⁵ The role of the medieval great hall is discussed in Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, pp. 30-40. He observes that the 'great hall was past its prime by 1400' (p. 31).

⁶⁶ Henderson, 'Escape from Formality', refers to loggias as providing 'an ideal transition from interior to external space' (p. 273). This transition is presumably also effective in reverse, as found in the approach to the entrance hall here.

⁶⁷ John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830*, rev. edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 62.

the layout. However, the efficiency of this layout is emphasised by comparison with the equivalent spaces at the Old Hall. There, the 'Forest great Chamber' is the most important room, forming the focus of the best accommodation. Associated with it are a withdrawing chamber, bed chamber and inner chamber, which appear to copy the customary model. However, these are not the areas designated as being the best rooms, which might be expected to accompany the great chamber. Instead, the 'best lodging', with its withdrawing chamber, bed chamber and inner room, is situated over the central part of the house and is physically a little removed from the great chamber from which it would, ideally, open directly. Furthermore, there is another chamber between the best lodgings and the great chamber, the 'Chamber at the Forrest great Chamber dore', which the 1601 inventory shows to have provided a luxurious bedroom.⁶⁸ Three sets of accommodation are therefore focused on the one great chamber, which is certainly economical but would not, perhaps, be perceived by contemporaries as particularly generous or suitable for the most important visitor.⁶⁹

The final component of the state rooms at Hardwick New Hall, the 'Gallerie', is well-known and has received much attention as the largest Elizabethan long gallery to have survived (illustration 22).⁷⁰ It served as a place for display, for exercise, for withdrawal from the adjacent state rooms and, at a practical level, as a means of easy access between the south and the north stairs.⁷¹

⁶⁸ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 34.

⁶⁹ Although the best lodgings give physical access to the 'Hill great Chamber' at the western end of the Old Hall, their orientation means that they are clearly not intended to be associated with it.

⁷⁰ Coope, 'The "Long Gallery"', p. 51, gives details of the sizes of other galleries.

⁷¹ The door at the southern end of the gallery connecting it with the 'high great Chamber' is the principal entry. The lesser door at the northern end, which opens onto the passage between the 'Pearle bed chamber' and the 'best bed Chamber', is probably primarily practical. The door surround is lightly chamfered on the gallery side but appears to be plain on the passage side, suggesting that it was not intended as a formal entry to the gallery. It is unclear whether the doorway from the 'with drawing Chamber' to the middle of the gallery, which is now later in appearance, was there originally.

The scale and grandeur do not need to be remarked again but are rendered even more impressive by comparison with Bess's attempts to include a gallery at the Old Hall, described above. The development from a small and unsatisfactory gallery at the Old Hall to the confident and assertive space of the gallery at the New Hall, reminiscent of the great gallery at Chatsworth or George Talbot's gallery at Worksop, is probably the most emphatic illustration of Bess's greater pretensions for her new building.⁷² The size of the new room suggests that Bess expected to be judged by the standards of those for whom a large and well-furnished gallery was a social necessity based on their experience of royal palaces and other courtiers' houses.

In the customary model of contemporary aristocratic houses, the owner's accommodation would reflect the layout of the best rooms, perhaps with a diminution of scale. At Hardwick Hall Bess's accommodation clearly consists of a withdrawing chamber, bed chamber and inner chambers but the relationship of these rooms with a great chamber is less clear.⁷³ *If they are connected, it is with the 'lowe great Chamber',* but the compact planning of the New Hall means that this room is separated from Bess's rooms by the entrance hall, a divide which is

⁷² The gallery at Worksop, which was approximately sixty-five metres long and lit by windows on both sides, is described in Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, p. 110. The High Gallery at Chatsworth was approximately forty metres in length and was also lit on both sides. Bess's deployment of galleries in her various houses is one of the most interesting aspects of her building development. However, it lies outside the remit of this examination of the social architecture of Hardwick Hall.

⁷³ The area occupied by Bess's rooms in the southern part of the building has been affected, although not significantly altered, by later changes, many of them cosmetic. One possible significant change is the addition of the wall which now separates the Drawing Room (Bess's 'with drawing Chamber') from the Drawing Room Passage. The alterations of the late seventeenth century also created an enfilade of doors along the whole length of the house which is clearly not Elizabethan. The original door to Bess's bedroom from the withdrawing room was not in its current position. Instead, it was in the north-east corner of the bedroom. This is discernible as a slight lumpiness in the wall on the bedroom side but is very clear in the Drawing Room Passage, where the door opening has been made into a cupboard. The interior of this cupboard contains chamfered door mouldings and the remains of a system for barring or locking the door from the inside.

not only physical but also symbolic. Girouard has no hesitation in asserting that Bess's rooms ranged across both sides of the first floor:

The entrance to [Bess's rooms] passed by the gallery of the chapel and went through the little dining chamber (which may originally have been only an ante-room) to what was called the low great chamber [...] from this the hall gallery led across to Bess's withdrawing-room, off which was her own bedchamber, maid's room and inner room, and the rooms of her granddaughter and ward, Arbella Stuart.⁷⁴

He adds further that this arrangement would have given the *suite of rooms* its own entrance from the north stairs, just as the state rooms on the top floor had their own entrance from the main south stairs.

It is possible, however, to argue that Bess's area should be restricted to the southern end of the house and that the northern rooms named by Girouard constitute a semi-public area into which Bess could certainly pass but which were chiefly occupied by the upper household and the tenants of the good quality accommodation to be found at the northern end of the building. The crossing 'Over the skreyne in the halle' marks a symbolic division between these public and private areas. To step onto it from 'my Ladies with drawing Chamber' is to step out of Bess's private world, which we should perhaps consider as an enclosed, female, practical domain, and into the more outgoing part of the house where the mistress could not only observe but, more importantly, be observed.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, pp. 155-6.

⁷⁵ The contents of Bess's rooms listed in the 1601 inventory certainly suggest that these private spaces were crammed with a multitude of bits and pieces which were primarily useful rather than showy. In private Bess did not need to be magnificent, she needed to get on with the business of running her affairs (*Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 53-5).

As will be discussed in the following chapters, Bess is a visitor into these public areas.

The private, southern end of the first floor also supplied accommodation for members of Bess's family. The south-east turret contained 'my Ladie Arbells Chamber', and the south-west turret is here considered to have housed the 'Prodigall Chamber'.⁷⁶ The placing of this good chamber amongst Bess's rooms must indicate that someone of both importance and intimacy used that room. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, it is likely that this room was intended for use by Mary and Gilbert Talbot, although they were irregular visitors to Hardwick. Three notable family chambers therefore converge on 'my Ladies with drawing Chamber' and their occupants may be assumed to have had some share in that room's use, moving to the 'lowe great Chamber' only at 'public' times. The importance of 'my Ladies with drawing Chamber' in forming the start of this suite of rooms is emphasised by the plasterwork head which decorates – even guards – the entrance to the room from the main, south stairs (illustration 23).⁷⁷

To some degree the division between the north and south of the house is repeated at ground level, where the rooms of the family and upper household are concentrated into the southern end of the building below Bess's, Arbella's and Mary's rooms, in opposition to the service areas which spread across the northern half of the building at that level. This physical and social division is forced onto the household by the rigid and defining nature of the transverse hall. Just as it has previously been observed that the hall is divorced from the living space and tied

⁷⁶ There is no consensus on the position of the 'Prodigall Chamber'. Some authorities place it on the eastern side of the house, others on the west. I have placed it on the west because all the available space to the east persuasively appears to be occupied by other rooms and the south-west turret room is not otherwise accounted for.

⁷⁷ The secondary entry to the rooms at this end of the house, which opens off a lower landing on the main stairs, was inserted during the building process but appears to have been an afterthought. It was presumably added for practical reasons and was not decorated or enhanced in any way.

firmly to the serving space, so at first floor level the hall itself serves to divorce the public space from the private space.

Apart from the 'hale', there is one other space which originally spanned both the ground and first floors, although it was reduced to the upper floor only in about 1800. The 'Chapple' is in the northern part of the building and is therefore in the 'public' part of the house, the side on which Bess may be considered to have left the privacy of the family apartments and entered the visible world of the 'public' areas common to most of the household. Although there are no documentary records to provide evidence of how religious services were managed at the Hall, there is no doubt that the chapel would have been one area in which all parts of the household could occupy the same space, albeit with a physical separation appropriate to their social distinctions. The lower part of the chapel presumably served the greater number of the household whilst the upper part was reserved for Bess and her intimates and provided an area where they could worship out of view of the people beneath, a practice also observed by the Queen at Hampton Court.⁷⁸ It is noteworthy that there is little architectural detail, such as traceried windows, for example, to differentiate the chapel from any other room except for the original open floor which enabled the worshippers above to view the 'Pulpitt' and the celebrant below.⁷⁹ The positioning of the chapel within the plan of the house also does little to suggest that this was a particularly important space. The lower chapel opens into the service area of the ground floor, near to the kitchens, and it is difficult to believe that the atmosphere of those offices did not permeate into the chapel. Above, there is little except an open wooden screen to separate the upper chapel from the busy thoroughfare of the first floor landing, a

⁷⁸ Simon Thurley, *Hampton Court: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 36 and 63.

⁷⁹ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 51.

pivotal area in movement around the northern end of the building. Indeed it is possible, as will be discussed in Chapter Three, that the landing was used to supplement the seating space available for worshippers in the upper part of the chapel, although those accommodated on the landing would have had no sight of activities in the lower chapel. Whilst this last factor could be interpreted as an attempt to integrate the business of worship into the very heart of the house, this does not seem to be a particularly persuasive argument. Bess maintained chaplains in her household but there is no evidence that she was particularly devout and it appears that whilst Bess required a place of worship – a luxury she had managed without at the Old Hall - she did not wish it to interfere with the design of her house.

As noted, the chapel is in the public part of the house and, at first floor level, is immediately adjacent to that most public space, the ‘lowe great Chamber’. The public nature of the ‘lowe great Chamber’ at Hardwick New Hall is emphasised by its relationship with several of the single rooms offering good quality accommodation. The inventory descriptions of these chambers show them to have had suitable furnishings, varying in status from the luxury of the ‘Pearle bed chamber’, which was effectively the second best bed chamber, to the solid comforts of the ‘greene bed Chamber’ or ‘Jacobs Chamber’.⁸⁰ Each of these rooms offers a bedchamber without the additional rooms that constituted the best quality suites and they were presumably apportioned between visitors and those members of the upper household who were not accommodated in the named chambers at the Old Hall. The rooms are distributed across the first, second and third floors but a common element of them is that they are located in the northern,

⁸⁰ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 43-4, 42 and 51. The furnishings are discussed in Chapter Three.

public part of the house in close proximity to the north stairs, providing, incidentally, the only portion of the layout where the grouping seems to be vertical rather than horizontal. The lack of outer chambers suggests that these bedrooms would all have looked to the 'lowe great Chamber' as their communal area.

The location of good rooms clustered round the north stairs also brings into question the perceived status of those stairs. Although impressive to first floor level, from there onwards they are narrow and wooden, not stone, and from the second floor upwards the central wooden partition is crude and the bottoms of the steps above form a very rough and unfinished ceiling (illustration 24).⁸¹ In addition to the coarse visual appearance, it may also be noted that the stairs serve as a funnel to drag all the kitchen smells up through the house. These upper flights, however, cannot be labelled merely as a service stair. They must be considered as providing not just sporadic access to the roof with its banqueting chamber, on which infrequent occasions the novelty of the expedition might negate the ordinariness of the route, but frequent access to bedrooms of reasonable quality, which could be seen and judged by users outside the intimate circle of the household.⁸² Above this level, and approached solely by this stair, the roof supplies six turret rooms (illustration 25). At the far end of the roof, the southern turret served as a banqueting chamber with far-reaching views over the

⁸¹ Alterations to the northern end of the house at first floor level have caused some changes to this staircase and the rooms immediately round it but have not radically altered the original plan. It is likely that the wooden stair originally terminated on the Chapel Landing several feet further back than it does now. Before the addition of fire precautions in the void under the stairs there it was possible to see that the paving continued further under the stairs, suggesting that it was once exposed floor. This length is equivalent to the small landing which was inserted into the wooden stairs in order to allow for the addition of the bathroom below.

⁸² Although there is no documentary evidence, I would like to suggest that the plasterwork cartouche which now guards the base of the wooden stairs at first floor level is not in its original position. It is more likely to have been sited originally over the door to the 'lowe great Chamber'. Alterations to the northern end of this floor have altered the opening onto the stairs and may, perhaps, have provided an incentive for the repositioning.

gardens and countryside, but the 1601 inventory shows that two of the turret rooms were then being used as storerooms, although their relatively simple plasterwork decoration suggests that they could also be used as bedchambers of modest status.⁸³ On one hand the rooftop walks provide practical access to store rooms and bedchambers but the presence of the banqueting chamber implies that the roof must, on the other hand, be considered as part of the building's high-status space, providing special visitors and family with fresh air, exercise, and commanding views to accompany the wine and sweetmeats of their banquets.⁸⁴

The rooms at the northern end of the building do not represent all the good quality accommodation available at Hardwick. It is clear that there was a great deal of good accommodation at the Old Hall to complement provision at the New Hall. As the illustrations of the conjectural layout of the upper floors of the Old Hall show, it is apparent that the other building provided several good-quality rooms and even suites of rooms, which could accommodate visitors or family. There is no documentary evidence to indicate which visitors, as distinct from family members, were housed in which building but it is easy to imagine that there must have been a necessary balance to be struck between superior rooms, probably provided by the Old Hall, and superior proximity to Bess at the heart of things in the New Hall. Room names in the 1601 inventory also show that the Old Hall provided accommodation for most of the men of the household, whether family or gentlemen retainers. As shown on the illustrations, there is a cluster of

⁸³ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 42. The 'Turret at the stayre head' contained a clock but has no other furnishings listed. The inventory does not identify the banqueting chamber or list the other turret rooms.

⁸⁴ There were originally four banqueting rooms at Hardwick. In addition to the one on the roof, there was one at ground level in the south east tower, one in the south-east corner of the garden and one in the north orchard. Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 36. The general function, design and location of banqueting chambers in this period are outlined in Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, pp. 104-08; and in Henderson, 'Escape from Formality', pp. 270-71.

these rooms on the first and second floors of the western range of the Old Hall, linked by the lesser stairs and probably looking to the 'Hill great Chamber' to serve as their communal area.

Hardwick New Hall has very little space devoted to the provision of low status accommodation. To some extent this is explained by the provision there of quantities of mattresses, bolsters and other bedding which could be moved into any space when required and then hidden away.⁸⁵ This has little direct effect, therefore, on the organisation of space within the building but does illustrate how the perceived functions of rooms were not necessarily their actual ones. As shown on the conjectural layout of the ground floor there, the bulk of the lower household must have been accommodated in the Old Hall, where there is a far greater number of rooms, in and around the service areas, whose furnishings suggest communal, low-status living.⁸⁶

This shared provision shows very clearly how the two halls were used together. Although it is shown most keenly in the lower-status accommodation, this mutual support is also visible in the provision of reasonable-quality space for the upper gentlemen of the household in the west wing of the Old Hall, as discussed above, and the availability of suites of higher-quality accommodation in the east wing and central section. In many ways the two houses duplicate spaces, with the 'Forest great Chamber' and its associated accommodation anticipating the 'high great Chamber' and the best rooms on the second floor of the New Hall, and the 'Hill great Chamber' probably serving a similar purpose to the 'lowe great

⁸⁵ For example, there were mattresses and bedding without bedsteads in a closet by the 'Prodigall Chamber', at 'my Ladies Chamber dore' and in the outer room to 'my ladie Arbell's Chamber' (*Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 54-5). Slightly more solid but still moveable were three 'bedstedes to turne up like Chestes', which were placed 'At my Ladies with Drawing Chamber Dore' and 'In the great half pace next above that' (p. 55).

⁸⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 39.

Chamber'. It could well be argued that the neat and compact planning of the New Hall was only possible because the Old Hall, itself a flawed and unsatisfying building, could be used to conceal the overflow of household life.

The organisation of the interior space within Hardwick Hall would have been one of the ways in which a contemporary could have 'read' the building. It creates routes and hierarchies, boundaries and thresholds, which would have shaped his understanding of the social mores at work in the household and his own place within that framework. Although some architectural novelty is permitted, the system only functions when all who occupy the spaces understand the basic blocks from which the plan is constructed and therefore appreciate their social boundaries and responsibilities. Hardwick Hall is built out of hierarchies, the keystone being the ascent which raises the most honoured visitor from the public spaces of the ground floor to the private splendours of the state rooms. All the other hierarchies of space within the plan are subservient to this. The two following chapters consider the ways in which the furnishings and the iconographic messages worked within this structure to illustrate and reinforce the social codes.

Chapter Three

The Furnishings of Hardwick Hall as Physical Objects

Discussion of the social architecture of Hardwick Hall in the previous chapter showed that the building was made up of a series of hierarchies and boundaries, all with defined functions and relationships, which governed the social practices of the occupants. In this chapter the role played by the furnishings as physical objects will be discussed. Put simply, it considers what Bess owned, how she acquired it, what she did with it and how her practices compared with those of her contemporaries. It is concerned with the furnishings as physical objects, their structure, materials and arrangement, and discussion of their subject matter, where it arises, has been postponed until the following chapter, which will deal with the iconographic schemes developing from the depictions on the furnishings and from the architectural decoration of the rooms they occupied. Later sections of this chapter consider wall-hangings, carpets, beds, furniture and pictures, using surviving artefacts where possible, but also drawing extensively on the evidence of Bess's 1601 inventories, the subject of the chapter's initial section.

The 1601 inventories of the Hardwick Halls and Chatsworth form the bulk of the evidence, together with some surviving items. The inventories used for comparison represent a number of affluent, aristocratic or royal owners, although for simplicity these will all be described as 'aristocratic' in the following discussion. The inventories have been selected because their dates fall within Bess's lifetime, *c.* 1527-1608, and, more pertinently, cover the three periods of her greatest building and furnishing works, the 1550s, 1570s/1580s and Hardwick

itself in the 1590s, culminating in the 1601 inventories. The pool of inventories includes those for Chatsworth in the 1550s and 1560s, and a newly-discovered one for Northaw, Bess's first Cavendish house, in the 1540s. These unpublished inventories of Bess's earlier houses have been transcribed and edited and appear here as Appendices One, Two and Three. It cannot be claimed that this process accurately compares like with like as the circumstances of all the inventories are inevitably different. However, an annotated list of the inventories consulted appears as Appendix Five and this provides some information about the circumstances surrounding the creation of each.

The 1601 Inventory and the Will of Bess of Hardwick

The principal source of information about the furnishing of the newly-finished Hardwick Hall is the 1601 inventory. This survives in four versions, two in the archive at Chatsworth and two in the Public Record Office.¹ These documents contain the inventories of Hardwick Hall, Hardwick Old Hall and Chatsworth. The Hardwick Hall material, edited by Lindsay Boynton and with a commentary by Peter Thornton, was published in the journal of the Furniture History Society in 1971 and then issued as a monograph with the addition of the Hardwick Old Hall inventory.² Both texts were re-published by the National Trust in 2001, with the addition of the Chatsworth inventory, which had not previously been published, and an introductory essay by Santina M. Levey.³

¹ Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick Drawers, H/279/9, is the original will and inventories; H/279/10 is a copy. Other copies are Public Record Office, PROB 11/111, fols 188-208 and PROB 10/254. A full list of all the documents relating to Bess's death, will and inventories is given in Appendix Four.

² Boynton, 'The Hardwick Hall Inventory'; Boynton, *The Hardwick Hall Inventories of 1601*.

³ *Of Household Stuff*.

Although these documents provide a wealth of information, it is necessary when working with any inventory to be aware 'of the criteria which established the form taken by an individual inventory'.⁴ The Hardwick and Chatsworth inventories need to be read in the context of Bess's will, to which they were appended. As that document has not received a critical publication, it has been presented here as Appendix Four.

Bess made her will on 27 April 1601. Despite her consideration therein of the transitory nature of life and the uncertainty surrounding the hour of death, there is no reason to suppose that she feared that death was imminent – indeed, she was to live for another seven years – and it is more likely that she wished to ensure that her affairs were in order and her intentions clear.

I Elizabeth Countesse of Shrewsburye. lately wife of George late Earle of Shrewsburye Deceased having learned aswell out of the holy Worde of god as by the common experience of the worlde that all fleshe must change this mortall life and that the hower and tyme of Deathe ys most vncerteyn and not to be knowen to any mortall creature, and accompting yt not the leaste parte of euery christian whilest healthe and memorye best serue so to dispose of suche goodes and thinges as god hath lent them during this mortall life that after their Deathe noe sute nor controuersie maye dulye be had or moued for the same Do nowe by this my Wrytinge Indented in my perfect healthe and good memorye I thanke my most mercifull father for yt, ordeyne and make this my last will and testament aswell to haue my mynde quyett from all wordlie

⁴ Penelope Eames, 'Inventories as Sources of Evidence for Domestic Furnishings in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', *Furniture History*, 9 (1973), 32-40 (p. 33).

respectes in all comfortable manner whollie to attend gods secrett
pleasure at all tymes of my sicknes and especiallie in the tyme of
my approaching Departure out of this transitorye worlde as allso for
to prevent all sutes Debates and controuersies that other wise
mighte arise or be moued amongst my children whome I most
cheifelie desire and hartelie praye to liue in all vnitie and naturall
affection: and withall to quyett setle and contynewe the
possessions of all suche Jewells plate furniture of houshold
Debtes goodes and chattells as god of his most gracious goodnes
hath vouchsaffed to bestowe on me.⁵

The concern for family harmony was not merely a sign of traditional concern but reflected the particular state of disaffection to be found in her Cavendish and Talbot families. It was Bess's intention to show favour to some and to deprive others. Essentially, Mary Cavendish, married to Gilbert Talbot, 7th Earl of Shrewsbury, and Charles Cavendish, Bess's third son, and their families, were to receive nothing in the will beyond the benefit of a mother's somewhat waspish blessing:

And whereas there hath ben vnkyndnes offred me by my Sonne in
lawe the Earle of Shrewsburie and my daughter his wife and
likewise by my sonne Charles Cavendishe by thevel meanes: I do
notwithstanding remitt all wronges and Iniuryes which they haue
done against me and do praye god to blesse them and to blesse and

⁵ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 188; cf. Appendix Four.

prosper theirs as allso to blesse all the Rest of my children with all
concord and good temporall and heavenlie blessings.⁶

By this 1601 will, however, all Bess's other surviving children and their progeny were to benefit in varying degrees, with especial generosity being shown towards the family of William Cavendish, Bess's second son.

Chatsworth, which Bess and her second husband had acquired in 1549, was entailed to Henry, their eldest son, and in the 1601 will Bess bequeathed the furnishings to him as well.

All my plate Bedding Hanginges and other furniture of
howsehold stuffe nowe remayning at my saied house at
Chatsworthe and which ar set downe by waye of Inventarye in one
Schedule to theise presents annexed All which furniture of
houshold stuffe my minde and will ys shall contynewe and
remayne there at my saied house at Chatsworthe aforesaied.⁷

This reinforced a deed of entail made in 1559, which was also attached to an inventory.⁸ These documents appear here as Appendix Two. By the 1601 will the contents of the two houses at Hardwick were bequeathed to William Cavendish, the second son, in like manner and listed in another inventory appended to the will. William also benefited from the contents of the house at Oldcotes, although these were not listed in an attached inventory. This omission is interesting.

⁶ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 191^v; cf. Appendix Four. Certain documents transcribed in Nathaniel Johnson, *Lives of the Earls of Shrewsbury*, 6 vols, (unpublished MS, Chatsworth Library: 1692), v, pp. 401-15, show that Mary Talbot believed that undue influence had been brought to bear on Bess by William Cavendish to turn her against Mary and Charles. The allegations also concerned alleged attempts to kill Bess and to hide her final nuncupative will. Some of these documents may be traced to the Talbot and Shrewsbury papers now in Lambeth Palace Library, MS 708, fol. 205 and MS 710, fol. 61. *A Calendar of the Shrewsbury and Talbot Papers*, I, pp. 170 and 196.

⁷ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 189; cf. Appendix Four.

⁸ Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick Drawers, H/143/2. Discussion of the exact date of this document is contained in Appendix Two.

Bess's intention was clearly that the contents of Hardwick should remain entailed forever with the house and that future owners should not be allowed to separate them. Although present by implication throughout the document, this is made clear almost as an aside in a passage dealing with a separate bequest:

And to William Cavendishe sonne and heire Apparunt of my sonne
William my Cuppe of Lapis Lazarus with the Cover to yt all
garnished with gould enameled as an heireloome to goe with the
house of Hardwicke and to stand entayled after the sayed William
the Younger his Deceasse in suche manner and forme as my
ffurniture of houshold stuffe at my howse or howses at Hardwicke
stand hereafter by theise presents entayled.⁹

The word 'heirloom' does not merely betoken a grandmother's sentimentality; it gives the gift a legal weight. Creating an heirloom made that object an inalienable part of the freehold property, which could not be treated as a realisable asset.¹⁰ It has been suggested that although there was no legal limit on the number of items that could be designated heirlooms, 'presumably the courts would not have accepted wholesale designations of heirlooms'.¹¹ Bess appears, however, to have seen a legal loophole and created hundreds, even thousands, of heirlooms. This was not without precedent. In a cancelled will of George Talbot, dated 1563, that is before his involvement with Bess, he listed a large quantity of valuable

⁹ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 188^v; cf. Appendix Four.

¹⁰ Jeff and Nancy Cox, 'Probate 1500-1800: A System in Transition', in *When Death Do Us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, ed. by Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000), pp. 14-37 (p. 25).

¹¹ Cox, 'Probate 1500-1800', p. 25.

household furnishings then at Sheffield which were to be left to his eldest son as heirlooms to remain at the family's principal seat.¹²

This is the only part of Bess's will in which the legal business of entailment is mentioned and it is easily overlooked in the greater body of the text. It is interesting to wonder whether the entail was intended for all the contents listed in the inventories of the three houses or just for Hardwick. As discussed above, the contents of Hardwick were associated, albeit somewhat distantly, with entail through the gift of a lapis lazuli cup. The arrangement for Oldcotes was specifically likened to the arrangement for Hardwick. The contents are to continue 'the same at my said house there in like manner as ys before prouided for my house or houses at Hardwicke'.¹³ It would be possible, therefore, to argue that the items in these houses were all protected by the entail so casually mentioned alongside the gift of a cup of lapis lazuli to her grandson, William. However, Chatsworth is not associated with the entail. There, Bess noted, 'all which furniture of houshold stufte my minde and will ys shall contynewe and remayne there at my saied house at Chatsworthe aforesaied'.¹⁴ The intention is clear but the binding legal force may be weaker. She certainly used a similar formula for Hardwick but reinforced it by association with an entail. The arguably looser rules governing the contents of Chatsworth might be explained by family circumstances. The items listed in the Chatsworth inventory were left to Henry Cavendish, the eldest son, and the heirs male of his body. In default of such heirs, they were to pass to his brother, William, and, in a clearly delineated order, his

¹² Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick Drawers, H/279/7. This document is very informative about Talbot's possessions. His final will, as published in *North Country Wills*, ed. by J.W. Clay, 2 vols (London: Surtees Society, 1908-1912), II (1912), pp. 148-50, makes no similar provisions and it must be supposed that the arrangements had already been made by other legal transactions.

¹³ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 189^v; cf. Appendix Four.

¹⁴ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 189; cf. Appendix Four.

heirs for ever. In 1601 Henry was past fifty, his wife, Grace Talbot, over forty, and they had no children. If Chatsworth and its contents were likely to come to William anyway, the lack of an entail would eventually give William greater flexibility to make use of the objects, either by sale or by transfer to one of his other houses. The Chatsworth inventory shows that the contents there were much depleted, both in quantity and quality, and it may not have seemed much of a gamble to bequeath them in this way.

A year after drafting her will, Bess removed the gamble altogether. In a codicil dated 20 March 1602/3 she disinherited her son Henry and grand-daughter Arbella Stuart completely:¹⁵

my Will ys that all and euey guifte Legacey and bequest by me
seuerallie giuen limited or appoynted either to my sayed
graundchilde Arbella Stewart or to my sayed Sonne Henry
Cavendishe by my sayed last will shalbe vtterlie frustrate voyde
and of none effect as thoughe my sayed graundchilde Arbella
Stewart and Henry Cavendishe had neuer ben named nor memoed
in the same.¹⁶

Although the new beneficiaries of the items hitherto bequeathed to Arbella and Henry are not made explicit, it is reasonable to assume that they would have come to William Cavendish with the rest of the residue of Bess's estate not otherwise bequeathed. Henry was thus left with the house of Chatsworth but none of the contents there that belonged to his mother. It is unlikely that Henry, who was customarily resident at Tutbury, had many or, indeed, any of his own furnishings there as a letter from John Harpur to Gilbert Talbot in February 1605/6 mentions

¹⁵ The family circumstances that caused this falling-out are described in Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, pp. 196-213.

¹⁶ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 192^v; cf. Appendix Four.

that Henry was hoping that Bess would furnish Chatsworth and hand it over to him before her death.¹⁷ In fact, Henry sold Chatsworth to William in August 1608, a few months after their mother's death, for £8000.¹⁸

Bess confirmed the 1601 will, with its later codicil, in 1606 and made minor verbal alterations in the twenty days before her death in February 1607/8. On her deathbed she forgave her daughter Mary, Countess of Shrewsbury, sufficiently to bequeath her 'the pearle Bedd with all that belonged to yt in that Chaumber (except the hanginges which she would not giue her[])]' and left 4000 marks for Charles Cavendish, her third and previously excluded son, to buy land for his sons.¹⁹ The 1601 will, with its later written and verbal codicils, was proved.

It is clear that the inventories of Chatsworth and the Hardwick halls were drawn up with a specific purpose within the testator's lifetime and that their contents were scrutinised by Bess herself, whose signature appears at the end of each inventory in the original document. It is not known, however, exactly when the inventories were drawn up, except that they may be presumed to have been ready by the date of the will, 27 April 1601, and common sense dictates that they would have taken some time to complete. Nor is it known by whom or by how

¹⁷ *A Calendar of the Shrewsbury and Talbot Papers*, II, p. 279, entry referring to vol. M, fol. 327.

¹⁸ Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick Drawers, H/241/22. The sale included not only Chatsworth but also nearly all of Henry's lands in Derbyshire and his part of the house in Chelsea. Documents transcribed by Nathaniel Johnson in *Lives of the Earls of Shrewsbury*, pp. 251-57, seem to suggest that William was engaged in a rather unsavoury attempt to buy Henry off before Bess's death, after which Henry, who was in a difficult financial position, would be better placed, having inherited Chatsworth. The eventual sum paid in August 1608 was several thousand pounds higher than the offers previously made by William to his brother. Following this transaction, William appears to have brought a bill in Chancery against his brother for breaking the entail. The whole episode merits proper study.

¹⁹ PRO, PROB 11/111, fols. 192^v-193; cf. Appendix Four. Mary Talbot accused her brother, William, of attempting to conceal Bess's change of heart towards her and the nuncupative will (Johnson, *Lives of the Earls of Shrewsbury*, pp. 403-15). See note 6, above. Sophia Holroyd, 'Embroidered Rhetoric', p. 72, comments that this bequest is an example of 'transmission of genealogy down the female line'. However, she does not speculate on whether there is any significance in the fact that the bed with its genealogical symbolism was left to the younger, but more socially elevated, surviving daughter rather than to the elder daughter, Frances.

many people they were drawn up. Maurice Howard has noted that there was at this period a growing group of people who 'developed the skills of inventory-taking' and 'formed something of a professional class'.²⁰ Bess, with her Court and legal contacts, could have had access to these people. However, in the absence of any specific payments for this work to outsiders in the household accounts, it is more likely that the inventory was taken by a person or people permanently employed on Bess's staff. Possessive descriptions such as 'my Ladies Chamber dore', 'my Ladies bookes' or 'my Ladie Arbells Chamber' seem to support the compiler's sense of identity with the household but certainly do not prove it.²¹

Whoever was responsible clearly had an expertise in certain aspects of the houses' furnishings or was advised by those whose knowledge was greater. This becomes apparent in the detailed descriptions of many of the textiles at Hardwick, which show a sophisticated ability to identify fabrics and techniques. As the original outlay on furnishings had been considerable, accuracy in the description of the articles was of obvious importance in avoiding any future disputes over such valuable assets, as well as establishing the generosity of Bess's bequest. Disputes over the ownership of textiles had featured in the arguments between Bess and her last husband, George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. In 1586, Shrewsbury and Bess argued over various household items, including 'two pairs of fine cambric sheets, six pairs of "pillow beres" and six cupboard cloths', which Bess observed were worn out as they had been made seventeen years earlier, and 'rich hangings, 8 pieces which were Sir Wm. Pickering's, which cost the Earl 200l', which Bess declared to have cost £180 and to have been passed to her by

²⁰ Maurice Howard, 'Inventories, Surveys and the History of Great Houses 1480-1640', *Architectural History*, 41 (1998), 14-29 (p. 16).

²¹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, in order, pp. 54, 53 and 54.

deed.²² Difficulty in the identification of specific objects could lead to dispute and was, therefore, to be avoided. The same need for accuracy is seen in the listing of plate, which would have been the other great expense of the furnishing. Given its enormous expense and its vulnerability to theft, it is reasonable to suggest that an inventory of the plate probably already existed and had merely to be checked and edited by Bess, whereas the rest of the inventory had also to be newly created.²³ This may possibly be one reason, in addition to intrinsic value, why the plate was listed separately instead of being included with the room-by-room contents of the inventory.

The sheer quantity of material in the inventories, the informed and methodical approach and the participation of Bess herself, lead to the assumption that the inventories represent a full and inclusive presentation of the contents of the houses. However, it is necessary to use this conclusion with some caution, remembering again the reason for their compilation. Unlike items listed in many other inventories, those chosen by Bess were selected with the precise intention that they should be handed down through her descendants and remain with the houses forever:

I especiallie will declare and appoynte that noe pretended will gifte
or devise to any other person or persons of the sayed former
bequeathed plate Beddinges hanginges or furniture to be allowed
or held good in Lawe [...] And I further will and especially requyer

²² *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury Preserved at Hatfield*, Historical Manuscripts Commission Series 9, 24 vols (London: HMSO, 1883-1976), III (1889), p. 160, item 321.

²³ As an indication of some editing of the list of plate, the two items with lapis lazuli which Bess initially bequeathed to her grand-children, Arbella and William, do not appear there. There are no surviving earlier complete lists of Bess's plate but partial lists may be found in Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick Drawers, H/143/8, which is an inventory of plate sent from London in 1587 and also includes a list of plate belonging to Arbella and a list of plate given away, and H/143/13, which is a substantial list of plate bought from Gardener the goldsmith and others, probably in the 1580s or 1590s.

that all and euery of the sayed persons to whome the vse and occupacon of the sayed plate Bedding hanginges and other furniture as so nowe generallie bequeathed or appoynted as aforesayed shall haue speciall care and regarde to p[re]serue the same from all manner of wett mothe and other hurte or spoyle therof and to leave them so preserved to contynewe at the sayed seuerall houses as aforesayed for the better furnishing them therewithall.²⁴

As Santina Levey has noted, 'to write such a will presupposed both a stable world in which values concerning style and quality remained unchanged, and expectations of housekeeping to an exceptionally high standard'.²⁵ Despite these presuppositions, however, there would have been no point in bequeathing items which were simply too perishable to entail with the house. Santina Levey has observed, for example, that there is no household linen already in use listed, as it could not be expected to survive long enough to be worth bequeathing, nor are there many of the protective covers which would have given prolonged life to the richer items, such as beds.²⁶ It would also be possible to argue that the inventories list an inadequate supply of ordinary kitchen dishes and utensils, and that this, too, would have been because they were considered as consumables to be replaced frequently and not, therefore, worth bequeathing. Personal items, including clothing, are not listed, as they would have been in other types of inventory, such as probate inventories. Nor are jewels, although there is mention of them in the will amongst the items which Bess wishes to bequeath, and it must be supposed that a separate listing of jewellery, which might also have included painted

²⁴ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 189^v; cf. Appendix Four.

²⁵ Levey, 'Fitted for Survival', p. 80.

²⁶ Levey, 'Fitted for Survival', p. 80.

miniatures, has been lost.²⁷ It is also possible that there were objects in use at Hardwick and Chatsworth that did not belong to Bess and so were invisible to the inventory. Her son William and his family often lived with Bess, as did her granddaughter, Arbella, and their personal belongings were obviously not Bess's to bequeath. Nor, probably, were any of the goods left to her by George Talbot as, by a deed of 3 January 33 Elizabeth (1591), which is not known to have been revoked, Bess had left all 'the goods Cattells Chattels Plate Jewels implements houshold stuffe leases of yeare or yeares and all other goods and Chattels whatsoever' which were hers by virtue of George Talbot's death, to her half-sister, Jane Kniveton, on condition that Bess should continue to enjoy them during her lifetime.²⁸

Issues of exclusion from the inventory lead again to the question of the contents of Oldcotes. Bess's will stipulated that the contents were to be left to William Cavendish:

And I do further by theise presents will bequeath and giue vnto my saied sonne william Cavendishe and the heires males of his bodye wth like Remynders ouer and to the like intent and purpose asys before Limited touching my furniture of houshold stuffe at my house or howses at Hardwicke all the beddings hanginges and other ffurniture of houshold stuffe which at the tyme of my decease I shall haue remayning and beyng at my house at Oldcoates in the sayed Countie of Derby for the ~~more~~ better and more suer

²⁷ Sheffield Archives: Shrewsbury Papers, MD 6311, contains some inventories of jewellery, jewelled clothing and plate for the years 1567-1599, but not a formal list prepared as part of a bequest.

²⁸ Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick Drawers, H/279/5. It is not known whether Jane Kniveton survived Bess.

contynewing of the same at my said house there in like manner as
ys before prouided for my house or houses at Hardwicke.²⁹

Unlike Hardwick and Chatsworth, however, no inventory is supplied to list these items specifically and it appears to have been sufficient for Bess merely to have said 'all'. This surely implies that inventories were necessary for the other houses precisely because 'all' would have been misleading or, indeed, illegal.

It has clearly been shown that the 1601 inventories served a particular purpose in the lifetime of their maker. Upon her death, however, the probate process would normally have demanded an inventory of Bess's goods, with valuations, in order to assess the size of the estate available to her executors.³⁰ No such probate inventory is known. In addition to the provision of the 1601 will and inventories, Bess had presumably made other legal arrangements for the disposal of her remaining goods, including items as diverse as clothing and cattle, and it can only be wondered whether these were legally transferred to new owners, however nominal, during Bess's lifetime, as in the case of the Kniveton deed, or whether there was a process after her death which has apparently left no documentary evidence. Above all, her will had already made provision for the payment of her debts and dues by putting aside a substantial sum of money in William's keeping. There was simply no need for the customary process of probate.

Whilst reading Bess's inventories it is necessary to use a little caution and to understand both the reasons that brought them into existence and the ensuing potential omissions from them. Perhaps a more complete impression of Bess's

²⁹ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 189^v; cf. Appendix Four.

³⁰ There is a good and straightforward account of the probate system at this time in part one of *When Death Do Us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, ed. by Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000).

furnishing activities would be gained from knowing the contents of Oldcotes and the London houses. However, these omissions are not sufficient to invalidate discussion of Bess's usage of the furnishings and the discussion in the rest of this chapter will not dwell on hypothetical shortcomings as there need be no doubt that the 1601 inventories provide a more than adequate chart for exploration.

Surviving artefacts provide a few landmarks on this road. It is not the intention here to track all Bess's things to show when they were lost from the house or to comment on their survival. Hardwick Hall was occupied by members of the Cavendish family for about three hundred and fifty years after Bess's death and their needs naturally refashioned the house's furnishings.³¹ Santina Levey has referred to this as 'the unstoppable force of human habitation, which imposes change and consequent destruction on the furnishings of even the most seldom occupied of houses'.³² It seems that this unstoppable force began as little as a decade after Bess's death and there are certainly many pieces surviving in the house which date from the first half of the seventeenth century. Nor, despite Bess's testamentary wishes, could her possessions be protected indefinitely from 'all manner of wett mothe and other hourte or spoyle'. Only about half a dozen pieces of furniture still in the house can be identified clearly with items in the inventory, although this may, in part, be due to the simplicity of most of the furniture descriptions there. Ironically, given their fragility, textiles seem to have survived in better numbers and this probably reflects their continuing value compared with old furniture and the fact that they would have been easier to put into storage and forget. Proportionally, Bess's pictures have survived quite well.

³¹ Later inventories of Hardwick survive at Chatsworth for 1626, 1764, 1792 and 1811, in addition to the catalogue compiled by Christie's at the time of the house's acceptance by the Treasury in lieu of tax in 1956. None of these has been published.

³² Levey, 'Fitted for Survival', p. 86. This article provides a detailed analysis of the surviving textiles.

Survival of even a few hundred items out of the thousands in the 1601 inventories is fortunate and can largely be put down to two things. First, when the Cavendish family was elevated to the highest levels of the peerage at the end of the seventeenth century, it was Chatsworth, not Hardwick, which they chose to remodel to reflect their new magnificence. By the time that house was finished, the aesthetic sensibilities of the time had turned to finding medieval and Elizabethan houses and their furnishings charming, although not necessarily suitable for daily living. Secondly, the family always maintained a respect – or possibly a sentimental fondness – for Bess, which encouraged them to preserve a fair amount of her memorabilia. Study of these surviving pieces adds a little colour to the bare outlines of the 1601 inventories.

The following sections consider wall-hangings, carpets, beds, furniture and pictures, using the evidence of the 1601 inventories and, where possible, surviving artefacts.

Wall-Hangings

This section presents a survey of Bess's textile wall-hangings, her tapestries, her richly decorated fabric hangings created using techniques such as embroidery and appliqué, her painted hangings, leather work and plain cloths.

The 1601 inventories show that Bess had 137 tapestries at her three Derbyshire properties, although the inventory-taker apparently mis-counted the *Ulysses* tapestries in the 'high great Chamber' and listed only six, whereas eight pieces have survived. The correct total, assuming no more errors hidden by the failure of survival, is 139. Of these, a mere twenty-one were at Chatsworth, forty at the Old Hall and seventy-eight at Hardwick New Hall. Comparison of these

totals with other collections is problematic because a set of tapestries could have any number of pieces within it. Comparison of the number of rooms furnished with tapestries might be another way but that would assume that the number of rooms at each property for which there is an inventory can be ascertained. Comparison of sets of tapestries is also imprecise because of the difficulty of identifying all the pieces of a set when they are spread across several rooms. Nevertheless, with these limitations in mind, the following table puts Bess's collection of tapestries in numerical context. None of the collections on the list compares at all favourably, however, with the more than six hundred tapestries which Cardinal Wolsey possessed in the early part of the sixteenth century or the more than two thousand tapestries possessed by Henry VIII and, presumably, his Tudor successors.³³

Location	Quantity	Location	Quantity
Kenilworth	169	Temple Newsam	46
Kenninghall	145	Lacock	42
1601 (all three houses)	139	Baynards Castle	41
Syon	98	Hardwick Old Hall	40
Leicester House 1580	97	Cheseworth	32
Sheffield Castle	85	Kimberley	29
Hardwick New Hall	78	Chatsworth 1601	21
Titchfield	61	Wollaton 1596	12
Healaugh	59	Gilling	10
Chatsworth 1559	48	Wollaton 1601	9
Lambeth Palace	48		

Bess's inventories are very straightforward in their language to describe tapestries. Some inventories rely on the general term 'hangings' and it is a matter of judgement to decide which are of a tapestry technique. Bess's, however, describe all the appropriate pieces as 'tapestry', with two exceptions. The

³³ Tom Campbell, 'Cardinal Wolsey's Tapestry Collection', *Antiquaries Journal*, 76 (1996), 73-137 (p. 73); *The Inventory of King Henry VIII*, ed. by David Starkey (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1998), *passim*.

hangings in the 'Pearle bed chamber' are described as 'Fyve peeces of hanginges called the planetes' but, as they have survived and the design is also known from other examples, their identification as tapestry is not difficult.³⁴ The inventory also correctly identifies the *Abraham* tapestries in the 'with drawing Chamber' as 'Arras' (illustration 26).³⁵ Tom Campbell has shown that by 1558 'arras', far from being either a generic term for all tapestry hangings or a term applied only to tapestries from Arras itself, had become officially defined as 'Tappestry with Golde Called Arras'.³⁶ As the *Abraham* tapestries have survived, it can be shown that they do, indeed, contain gold thread details. Of the survivors, these are the only ones to have this extra ornamentation and it may reasonably be suggested that the inventory is correct in giving the name 'Arras' only to them. The inventory-taker did, however, exaggerate as the set of four tapestries only has one piece with gold thread. This was reflected in the purchase price, as three of the panels cost fourteen shillings per Flemish ell and the fourth, the 'Arras' piece, cost twenty shillings.³⁷

The *Abraham* tapestries, in addition to the metal thread used in one panel, also have a high silk content, which is indicative of good quality. In the 1559 Chatsworth inventory it had, for example, been worthy of note that the hangings consisted of 'Clothes of arras xlvij peces whereof are wth silke sixtene peces the others of courser sortes', clearly showing the higher quality of the silk pieces.³⁸

³⁴ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 43.

³⁵ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 47.

³⁶ Tom Campbell, 'Tapestry Quality in Tudor England: Problems of Terminology', *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 3 (1995), 29-50, (p. 33). Campbell's article provides much stimulating information about the terminology used to describe various grades of tapestry and it would be interesting to widen his discussion to the different names used in the inventories searched for this study. However, as Bess's inventory is so simple in its terminology, the point does not arise here.

³⁷ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 23, referring to Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick MS 7, fols 18, 24^v and 28^v. The tapestries were paid for and, therefore, presumably bought on three separate occasions.

³⁸ Hardwick Drawers, H/143/2; cf. Appendix Two. Note the less discriminating use of 'arras'.

This characteristic of the *Abraham* tapestries is shared by the set of *Planets* in the 'Pearle bed chamber' and the *Ulysses* tapestries in the 'high great Chamber' (illustration 27).³⁹ These three sets of tapestries appear in rooms of high status. As far as may be deduced from surviving pieces, the remainder of Bess's tapestries did not have the high silk content of these sets and their lower status is demonstrated by their hanging in rooms of lesser importance. These three sets of tapestries are also given prominence by the identification of their subject matter. Only four other sets have identified names in the inventory, the *Gideon* set in the 'Gallerie', the 'storie of the Prodigall sonne' in the 'Prodigall Chamber', the *David* set in the 'lowe great Chamber' and the 'Tobie' set in 'Tobies Chamber'.⁴⁰ Two other sets of tapestries may have their subjects identified. The building accounts show a payment for work 'in the chambr wheare the storye of Jacob hangth', which may reasonably be supposed to be 'Jacobs Chamber', where there were 'too peeces of tapestrie hanginges with personages twelve foote deep' in 1601.⁴¹ Santina Levey has also shown that sixteen of the unidentified tapestries at the Old Hall were probably the *Nathan* set, which Bess bought cheaply in 1591 for £96 18s., or just six shillings an ell. It is significant that the inventory does not bother to identify these sets, presumably because of their low cost and relative unimportance.⁴²

Another set of tapestries with an unidentified subject is to be found in 'my Ladies with drawing Chamber'. They are described as 'sixe peeces of tapestrie hanginges with personages and my Ladies Armes in them, [...] the hanginges

³⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 47.

⁴⁰ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 48, 55, 52 and 50. In Hardwick MS 6, fol. 254^v, this room is called 'Tobias chamber', which reflects the subject of the tapestries hanging there at a surprisingly early date.

⁴¹ Hardwick MS 6, fol. 255^v; *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 51.

⁴² Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, pp. 23-4.

Sixe foote deep'.⁴³ These hangings have survived and still hang in the same room. The scenes depicted are obviously meant to illustrate a particular narrative, which is probably biblical in origin, and the tapestries clearly come from two weavings because there is some degree of duplication. Their unusually shallow depth is compensated for by the unusual height of the panelling in that room, which had 'wayscott under the hainginges rownde about', and they are an example of the short style especially woven in Flanders for the English market.⁴⁴ Bess's coat of arms, which appears in the centre of the pictures, is a painted addition placed over the arms of the original owner, Sir Christopher Hatton. Hatton had also been the original owner of the *Gideon* tapestries in the 'Gallerie'. Earlier, a set of hangings, which might be identified as the *Ulysses* tapestries, had been bought from Sir William Pickering at the cost of either £180 or £200.⁴⁵ Obviously, there was no problem about displaying second-hand tapestries, although Bess's replacement of Hatton's arms with her own shows some social embarrassment and it is known that when purchasing the *Gideon* tapestries Bess had the sum of £5 9s. 9d. removed from the total cost of £326 15s. 9d. in order to compensate her for the trouble to which she would be put by replacing Hatton's arms with hers.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 53.

⁴⁴ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 53; Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 19.

⁴⁵ *HMC Salisbury*, III, p. 160. The movement of tapestries and other furnishings through different people's collections, whether through inheritance, purchase or confiscation, would make a useful study.

⁴⁶ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 22, quoting Hardwick MS 7, fol. 28^v. The replacement arms, which were painted not woven, were not required until 1598, when 30s. 4d. was paid for them, with 10s. given to the man who brought them (Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick MS 8, fols 29^v-30). The dating of MS 8 is misleading. Folio 1 names it as 'A Book of Accounts of Moneys paid by the Countess of Shrewsbury to her House Stewards &^{tc} and other Disbursements thereof Beginning in 1592 and Ending 1596'. This is in a later hand. The next pages of the volume are blank until the accounts begin on fol. 23. These accounts begin with entries dated 1592. However, there is internal evidence that this should be 1598. For example, fol. 28^v refers to wages for the 40th year of Queen Elizabeth I, which would be 17 November 1598 – 16 November 1599. Further evidence is supplied by fol. 30^v, which refers to the gathering of tithes for 'the yere 1598'. The dates given above are in the corrected form.

Nor was it necessarily a problem to display old tapestries. Only one set in the inventory is actually described as 'olde' and this is well out of the way in the 'middle gatehouse Chamber' at Chatsworth but it is likely that several sets still used in 1601 had also appeared in the 1559 and 1560s inventories of Chatsworth and were therefore at least fifty years old.⁴⁷ These were young, however, by comparison with the pieces now known as the Devonshire Hunting Tapestries, which are in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (illustration 28).⁴⁸ These were 'discovered' in the Long Gallery at Hardwick in 1899 and have been identified with the hangings listed in the 'hale' and 'my Ladies Bed Chamber' in 1601. These are described as

too peecees of tapestrie hanginges with personages and forrest
worke Fyftene foote and a half deep

and

Foure peecees of tapestrie hanginges with personages of forrest
worke of fyftene foote and a half deep.⁴⁹

The depths are unusual and are one of the main reasons for identifying these descriptions with the surviving Devonshire Hunting Tapestries. These panels date from the second quarter of the fifteenth century and were woven in the Southern Netherlands but their subsequent history up to 1601 and the manner in which Bess acquired them are unknown.⁵⁰ Their use in her own own bed chamber is

⁴⁷ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 22. See also Appendices Two and Three.

⁴⁸ Museum Numbers T.202-1957, T.203-1957, T. 204-1957, T. 205-1957.

⁴⁹ *Of Household Stuff*, pp. 53 and 56. The tapestries are now in four pieces, not six, but they were already cut up into smaller pieces when they were 'discovered' in 1899 and so may easily have been in six pieces in 1601.

⁵⁰ Linda Woolley, *Medieval Life and Leisure in the Devonshire Hunting Tapestries* (London: V&A Publications, 2002), passim. The tapestries are also considered in George Wingfield Digby, assisted by Wendy Hefford, *The Devonshire Hunting Tapestries* (London: HMSO, 1971). Woolley's suggestion (p. 23) that they had been the property of George Talbot, having descended through his family, is certainly the most logical, although it would be interesting to check this against earlier Talbot family inventories if any exist. If they were really Talbot's it seems

interesting but not demonstrative of particular status, as the rest of the room's furnishings show it to have been a full rather than an impressive room.⁵¹ Hangings of fifteen and a half feet in depth must have been folded or bunched up in order to fit the walls, which hardly suggests that the tapestries were chosen for value, although it is impossible to judge the aesthetic or sentimental appeal they may have held for Bess. Their use in the 'hale', however, is more striking. Although very simply furnished, the 'hale' was an impressive architectural space and of great symbolic power, as the first interior to greet the visitor and as the traditional seat of feudal or landowning power. It is not a room in which an owner would wish to make a hesitant statement about his or her status and so it must be assumed that even tapestries more than one hundred and fifty years old could still be considered a valid weapon in the war of magnificence, perhaps even lending validity to subliminal claims of unchanging authority and continuity.

Magnificence could also be achieved through the use of richly decorated fabric hangings. Only one room at Chatsworth, the 'noblemans Chamber', has hangings which may be put in this category: 'ffowre peeces of Cloth of golde and velvet hangings'.⁵² Although the fabrics are not richly decorated, they are of high quality in themselves and the effect would have been more emphatic than rooms simply dressed with hangings of plain fabric. The Old Hall has no hangings of this more elaborate type. At the New Hall, however, eight rooms are hung with richly decorated fabric hangings and it is noticeable that the majority of them are rooms

remarkable that they do not seem to appear in the marital disagreements over property between Talbot and Bess. They do not appear to be in Talbot's draft will of 1563, where so many furnishings are listed, although they could lie unidentified under the brief descriptions provided there (Hardwick Drawers, H/279/7).

⁵¹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 53.

⁵² *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 25.

of high status or closely associated with them. The 'best bed Chamber' is hung with

Seaven peeces of hanginges of imbroderie of Cloth of golde and silver, cloth of tyssue, velvett of sondry Coulers, and nedleworke twelve foote deepe, one peece of the picture of fayth and his contrarie Mahomet, an other peece with the picture of hope, and the contrary Judas, an other peece with the picture of temperaunce and the contrary Sardanapales, the other fowre peeces paned and wrought with flowers and slips of nedle work.⁵³

Two of these, the panels depicting Faith and Temperance, have survived, along with fragments of the Hope panel. Of the four companion pieces there is no trace. Santina Levey has shown that these panels were made in the 1590s and they were therefore new for the new house.⁵⁴

The panels for the 'with drawing Chamber', however, had originally been made for Chatsworth in the 1570s. These are:

Fyve peeces of hanginges of Cloth of golde velvett and other like stuffe imbrodered with pictures of the vertues, one of Zenobia, magnanimitas and prudentia, an other of Arthemitia, Constantia and pietas, an other of penelope, prudentia, and sapientia, an other of Cleopatra, fortituto, and Justitia, an other of Lucretia, Charitas and liberalitas, everie peece being twelve foote deep.⁵⁵

Four of these panels have survived but only tiny fragments of the Cleopatra hanging are known and none of these, unfortunately, comes from the central

⁵³ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 45.

⁵⁴ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, pp. 68-73. Technical matters concerning the construction of these panels and the following ones are not discussed here. They will be considered fully in Santina Levey's forthcoming catalogue of Hardwick's Elizabethan embroideries.

⁵⁵ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 47.

figure herself. Many of the fabrics for these hangings came from church vestments which had been acquired in earlier years and then cut up for use in this secular setting.⁵⁶ No doubt careful research would reveal this practice amongst Bess's English contemporaries but it is known that Mary, Queen of Scots, recycled church vestments in this way. In the spring of 1565, Servais de Condé noted 'three copes, two tunicles and a chasuble, all of green velvet, whose ornaments were broken up to decorate a bed with embroidery and flowers', and two years later he further recorded that Mary had taken 'for herself a cope, chasuble and four tunicles to make a bed for the King (Darnley)'.⁵⁷ This royal use and Bess's positioning of her recycled hangings in such prominent positions shows that hangings made by the re-use of old fabrics were not considered inferior.

These sets of hangings share an appliqué construction technique and it may be possible to add the hangings in the 'upper Chapple' to this group, as they are described as 'too peeces of hanginges imbrodered with pictures Seaven foote and a half deep'.⁵⁸ The description is vague but it seems from the other sets of hangings that pieces using the appliqué technique may also be described as embroidered. The hangings in the 'passage betwene the best bed Chamber and the gallerie' also have elements of appliqué, although not on the same scale as these other hangings. These consist of

⁵⁶ The hangings played their part in the arguments between Bess and George Talbot during the 1580s. They – or at least items identified as these hangings – appeared in a letter of 1 August 1586, in which he demanded the return of many items but was willing to allow his wife to keep these hangings, despite the fact that he claimed that they had been made in his house and at his expense. Three days later Bess responded with a list of reasons why the demanded items would not be returned to her husband. Of the hangings she retorted that the copes for their manufacture had been bought by Sir William St. Loe, her third husband, and had already been at Chatsworth, that the hangings were made at Chatsworth, which was hers for life, and that they had been made at her expense by members of her household, not Talbot's professional embroiderers. *HMC Salisbury*, III, p. 161.

⁵⁷ Swain, *The Needlework of Mary Queen of Scots*, p. 51.

⁵⁸ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 51.

Nyne peeces of hanginges of white cloth with petestalls and
portalls of other Coulers and layde with white and yellowe twyst
and with portalls and pavementes rownde about, everie peeces
twelve foote deep.⁵⁹

This probably includes the eight panels with female figures representing the Liberal Arts (illustration 29). It is difficult to find examples of appliqué hangings in the houses of Bess's later contemporaries but parallels may be found in the collections of Henry VIII.⁶⁰ Bess's contacts with Court start in the middle of the century and, as will be discussed later, it seems possible that her tastes were set at that time, even if her appliqué hangings were not made until the last quarter of the sixteenth century. As Bess chose to place these hangings in prominent rooms, she cannot have considered them impossibly outmoded or inappropriate, despite their absence from the houses of her peers.

The remaining sets of richly wrought fabric hangings at Hardwick do not use an appliqué technique in the same way to make the overall design, although individual slips may well be applied to the main surface. Two of the sets make their effect through the richness of the fabric:

[little Chamber within the best bed-chamber]: Fyve peeces of
hanginges of grene velvet and Cloth of golde and silver set with
trees and slips and Ciphers with long borders of stories in
nedleworke and borders about all those hanginges of Cloth of
tyssue silver and grene silk, everie peece being Eight foote deep
and

⁵⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 46.

⁶⁰ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 69.

[my Ladie Arbells Chamber]: sixe peeces of hanginges of yellowe,
blewe and other Coulored damask and sattin wrought with golde
flowers and trees and lyned with Canvas.⁶¹

The last set of richly wrought fabric hangings, for the 'high great
Chamber', seems, by comparison, almost dull:

An other sute of hanginges for the same Chamber being eight
peeces of woollen cloth stayned with frett and storie and silk
flowers.⁶²

The description is not helpful because it fails to identify the 'storie' depicted. This is an unfortunate omission in the account of a room of such great importance, especially as the panels have not survived to allow visual analysis of their content or of their quality. The allusion to a staining technique, however, is interesting, especially as it is being used on textiles hung within such a high-status space. Hardwick's most important surviving painted hangings, the four panels of scenes from *The Acts of the Apostles*, now in the Chapel, do not appear in the 1601 inventory, as it is likely that they were being made at that very time. They give an impression, however, of how much impact could be made by a suite of painted hangings (illustration 30). It has been suggested that the organised production of painted cloths in England at the end of the sixteenth century was in decline, beaten down by the import of cloths from Flanders. A complainant in 1601 observed that 'Painting on Cloth is decayed, and not *One Hundred Yards* of New Painted Cloth made here in a Year, by reason of so much painted *Flanders* pieces brought from thence'.⁶³ This falling-off of the English industry led Peter Thornton

⁶¹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 46 and 54.

⁶² *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 47.

⁶³ Quoted in Edward Croft-Murray, *Decorative Painting in England* (London: Country Life, 1962), p. 30, n. 1.

to suggest that Bess's hangings in the 'high great Chamber' were probably Flemish.⁶⁴ However, there is evidence that these hangings were produced 'in-house', as there is a surviving record showing the purchase of 'paynting stuff for John Painter for stayning the cloth hanging'.⁶⁵

As with richly wrought hangings in general, Bess seems to be unusual in making such prominent use of painted work. Hardly any mention of painted hangings is made in contemporary aristocratic inventories. At Leicester House in 1580, Robert Dudley had hangings 'of redd linsly wolsly wth painted pillors peecs xxxvij'.⁶⁶ At Titchfield in 1601, the Earl of Southampton had a 'hanging painted with Liley potts' but this was old, 'ragged and torne'.⁶⁷ Susan Foister has shown, however, that painted cloths and hangings were more readily associated with classes lower than the aristocracy, including London merchants, and it may be that Bess would have surprised her contemporaries by using objects 'beneath her place' in the social order.⁶⁸

Bess's minimal use of leather wall-hangings appears to be less unusual. At the New Hall only one room, the 'stayre Chamber', has them and the inventory describes these as 'sixe peeces of guilt lether hanginges, Twelve foote deep'.⁶⁹ This room is a good chamber but not a particularly splendid one and there is no sense in which Bess could be said to be revelling in the display of her leather hangings by placing them here. There is a greater display of leather hangings at

⁶⁴ Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration*, p. 123.

⁶⁵ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 74, quoting Hardwick MS 8, fol. 82. John Painter, also known as John Balechouse, was a permanent member of Bess's staff, whose career with her will be discussed in Chapter Five.

⁶⁶ Longleat House, The Dudley Papers, V, fol. 4 [on CD-ROM]. By 1583 one of these painted panels was to be found at Kenilworth. *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord de L'Isle and Dudley, preserved at Penshurst Place*, Historical Manuscripts Commission Series 77, 6 vols (London: HMSO, 1925-66), I (1925), p. 279.

⁶⁷ National Archives: Public Record Office, LR 1/10, vol. 10, fol. 23^v.

⁶⁸ Susan Foister, 'Paintings and Other Works of Art in Sixteenth-Century English Inventories', *Burlington Magazine*, 123 (1981), 273-82 (p. 274).

⁶⁹ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 42.

the Old Hall, where the 'Forest great Chamber' has 'sixe peeces of lether hanginges gilded and paynted seaven foote and a half deep' and 'my Ladies Chamber' has 'seaven peeces of lether hanginges paynted and gilded'.⁷⁰ There is also a large quantity of pieces of leather in store in the 'lowe wardrop' at the Old Hall, consisting of 'Fyftie and one peeces of guilt lether wrought, thirtie and foure peeces of guilt lether silvered but not fynished'.⁷¹ The fact that some of these are unfinished and none of them has been made up into whole hangings suggests that leather was not considered a priority as a fabric for wall-hangings. In this, Bess was in line with most of her contemporaries.

Peter Thornton has noted that "Gilt leather" was extensively used for wall-hangings during the seventeenth century'.⁷² It does not appear in any quantity in aristocratic inventories of the late sixteenth century but the chief enthusiast seems to have been Robert Dudley. The Leicester House inventory of 1588 reveals 'xij ould guilte leather hanginges', priced at £3, in the 'lowe Gallerie' but the depth of his collection of leather wall-hangings is revealed by the Kenilworth inventory of 1583.⁷³ There, the Earl had

Sixteen pieces of gilt leather hangings "having everie one in the topp the picture of a mann and a woomann" [...]

Three pieces of the story of Susanna "paned gilt and blewe" [...]

Three pieces of the Storie of the prodigal child "paned gilt and blewe" [...]

Two like pieces of the story of Saul [...]

⁷⁰ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 34 and 38.

⁷¹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 34.

⁷² Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration*, p. 118. He also provides an interesting description of the techniques used to make leather hangings, p. 118-23.

⁷³ Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, 'Essex House, formerly Leicester House and Exeter Inn', *Archaeologia*, 73 (1923), 1-54, (p. 34).

Three pieces of red leather, paned gilt and blue [...]

One piece, gilt and green, of the story of Tobye [...]

Five pieces, gilt and green [...]

Four pieces gilt and black.⁷⁴

It is not the intention of this work to analyse Dudley's collections except where they illustrate Bess's. It may be noted, however, that Dudley's narrative leather hangings were far more forward-looking than Bess's decorative pieces and show a level of interest to which Bess did not apparently aspire.⁷⁵

The 1601 inventories show a very small number of plain cloth hangings. At Chatsworth there are just seven rooms so hung, with one more set of hangings in store in the 'middle wardrop'. None of these is a room of much status. The Old Hall, however, has even fewer, with just two rooms hung with plain fabric, the 'Inner Chamber' to 'my Ladies Chamber', which is hung with 'eight peeces of Darnix', and the 'long gallerie', which has 'nyne peeces of grene cloth hanginges, fower foote deep'.⁷⁶ Green cloth, which is usually a very ordinary fabric used for unimportant purposes, is surprising in the 'long gallerie' but the compromised nature of the room itself, as discussed in the previous chapter, might have urged against very grand hangings. The inventory also shows that the room had 'waynscott rownde about the gallerie', presumably to a height to meet the otherwise rather short hangings.⁷⁷ There is no green cloth in use at the New Hall, although there are three pieces in store in 'one of the turretes on the leades'.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ *HMC de L'Isle and Dudley*, I, 278-98, (p. 279), where the sizes of these panels are also given.

⁷⁵ The only example of leather hangings that I have found from the middle part of the century comes from Syon House, the property of the Duke of Northumberland, Dudley's father. He had nine pieces with his arms on them, which were priced at 6d. the yard, £3 18s. in total. The price per yard is the cheapest of all his hangings. National Archives: Public Record Office, E 154/2/39, fol. 19.

⁷⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 38.

⁷⁷ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 38.

⁷⁸ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 42.

'Mrs. Knyvetons Chamber' on the ground floor has 'seaven peeces of darnix hanginges' and a 'closet by the Pearle bed chamber' contains 'sixe peeces of hanginges of red mockadowe'.⁷⁹ As the only other contents of this latter room are a close stool and its fitments, it is difficult to say whether the six hangings, which seem a large number for a small room, were in use there or just in store. This limited use of plain cloth seems typical of other aristocratic inventories, with the possible exception of the Duke of Norfolk's 1546 inventories of Kenninghall, Shelfhanger and Castle Rising.⁸⁰

Bess may have had a large and varied collection of wall-hangings in use around her houses but she had very little in reserve to allow for variation in her room styling. Except for the pieces of leather mentioned above, there was nothing else in store at the Old Hall - unless the whole contents of that house are to be seen as a reserve collection for the more prestigious displays at the New Hall - and only 'four peeces of tapestrie hanginges' and 'some peeces of blewe hanginges' in store at Chatsworth, and 'three peeces of grene cloth hanginges' at the New Hall.⁸¹ However, the inventory makes it clear that in two rooms, the 'with drawing Chamber' and 'high great Chamber' there were alternative sets of hangings. These are listed amongst the contents of the rooms they served and it is unclear whether at the time of the inventory they were really physically present in the appropriate rooms or whether, for the sake of clarity, they were listed with the room to which they belonged but were actually in storage elsewhere.

In each of these two rooms, a set of tapestry hangings has as its alternative a set of richly wrought fabric hangings. In the 'with drawing Chamber' the

⁷⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 44 and 56.

⁸⁰ National Archives: Public Record Office, LR 2/115. These inventories show many rooms which are hung with plain fabric, especially 'Pulham work'. Pulham was a village in Norfolk with a reputation for the manufacture of woollen cloth.

⁸¹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 23 and 42.

classical heroines described above are listed alongside the *Abraham* tapestries, which are described as 'An other sute of hanginges for the same roome'.⁸² In the 'high great Chamber' the *Ulysses* tapestries are accompanied by 'An other sute of hanginges for the same Chamber being eight peeces of woollen cloth stayned with frett and storie and silk flowers'.⁸³ Peter Thornton has suggested that this represents alternative sets for winter and summer.⁸⁴ His rationale for the practice of alternating hangings with the seasons, which he proves to have been frequent in the later part of the seventeenth century, is that

Hangings of tapestry or velvet and other thick materials are warm in character and are particularly suitable for clothing a room in wintertime. But in the summer heat they can seem hot and dusty. For this reason, particularly grand rooms were sometimes hung differently in summer and in winter.⁸⁵

It is difficult to apply this theory to the Hardwick hangings as there does not appear to be a particular distinction in weight between the tapestry sets and the wrought fabric sets. The hangings of the classical heroines are darker and more sombre than the *Abraham* tapestries with which they alternated, but there is no surviving evidence to make a similar comparison between the *Ulysses* tapestries and the stained woollen hangings in the 'high great Chamber'. Given that the heroines formed part of an intentional iconographic scheme, which will be discussed fully in the next chapter, it is hard to believe that they would be removed just because the season changed. It is possible that the reason lies in basic conservation and that one set in each room was considered more disposable

⁸² *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 47.

⁸³ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 47.

⁸⁴ Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior*, p. 106.

⁸⁵ Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior*, p. 105.

than the other. This would be particularly relevant in rooms with unprotected windows of about twenty feet in height. Such concern for the damaging effects of sunlight is not explicit at this time but there is some evidence that hangings might be graded in terms of expendability. In the dispute over property between Bess and George Talbot, referred to above, a set of hangings of green leaves was said to have been 'Given 19 years since to save a better hanging'.⁸⁶

The inventory appears to state that at the time it was written, the 'with drawing Chamber' was hung with its embroidered hangings and the 'high great Chamber' with its tapestries. If this is indeed the case, it seems a little at odds with Bess's sense of textile hierarchy. The best rooms, the 'high great Chamber', 'with drawing Chamber' and 'best bed Chamber' form a sequence, climaxing in the overwhelming richness of the best bedroom with its rich fabric bed-hangings and wall-hangings. This seems to emphasise the pre-eminence of richly decorated fabric wall-hangings. The wall-hangings in the two outer rooms, however, seem less obviously sequential. It would be more satisfying if the hangings and alternative hangings in one of the outer rooms were reversed. This would allow for a very obvious pair of sequences. If both sets of tapestries were hung at the same time, the outer room, the 'high great Chamber', would be decorated with a set of very good quality tapestries of high silk content. The 'with drawing Chamber', if hung with the *Abraham* suite of tapestries, would display Bess's only arras set, that is, her only set with metal thread content. Alternatively, if the two rooms were hung with the non-tapestry hangings, another hierarchy would be established, as the relatively simple decorated woollen hangings of the outer room would lead on to the more elaborate cloth of gold, velvet and embroidery

⁸⁶ *HMC Salisbury*, III, p. 160.

figurative panels in the 'with drawing Chamber'. It is just possible to speculate, albeit based on fancy rather than evidence, that the 'high great Chamber' was actually hung with its stained woollen hangings at the time and that the *Ulysses* tapestries were in store, which would explain why the inventory-taker miscounted them, as mentioned at the beginning of this section.

Both these two outer rooms had panelling around them at a low height to show beneath the hangings. Bess's arrangement of wall-hangings through her houses was strongly influenced by the different amounts of wainscot panelling in them. This panelling is also listed in the inventory because it is moveable, as later rearrangements of it demonstrate. The panelling at Chatsworth, which is very rich, dates from the major building programmes of the 1570s and 1580s. Whilst several rooms are simply 'waynscotted' according to the inventory, some of the more important rooms are extravagantly clad in carved, coloured and inlaid work. The 'high great Chamber' there, for example, is 'verie fayre wainscotted with Coloured woodes markentrie and set fourth with planetes', 'Savills Chamber' is 'verie fayre wainscotted or seeled with Coulored woods markentrie, pelasters and Carving', and the 'high gatehouse Chamber' is 'verie fayre waynscotted with Coulored woodes set out with portalls and some alabaster and other stone'.⁸⁷ Some rooms, such as the 'matted gallerie' and 'closet to the muses Chamber', are panelled to their full height.⁸⁸ Even storage rooms have panelling and some of them, such as 'my Ladies wardrop' and the 'maydes Chamber', have built-in presses.⁸⁹ This was a level of magnificence which Bess could not maintain at the Hardwick Halls, both of which have some wainscot in most rooms but often simply 'under the windowes' and never richly decorated. Although we now see an

⁸⁷ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 24 and 22.

⁸⁸ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 24.

⁸⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 23 and 26.

inventory that shows a rather depleted Chatsworth, it is likely that the richness of the panelling there originally at least equalled, if not surpassed, the tapestries and other wall-hangings.

It has been shown that Bess possessed a large collection of wall-hangings but with little left in reserve to allow for variety in the hang. The portable nature of textiles means that, given enough manpower and time to do the actual moving, textile schemes need not be permanent, but it appears that Bess arranged her wall-hangings on hierarchical principles which, given the lack of reserves, would have made variation of the hang difficult. Richly wrought fabrics, for which Bess shows an unusual fondness, appear in the rooms of highest status. Tapestries follow in the hierarchy, with those containing silk or metal thread displayed in the key places. Coarser wool tapestries serve for lesser rooms and plain fabric barely intrudes at the New Hall, the showcase house. Leather hangings are only used very sparingly, which suggests that she made use of the few pieces that happened to be available to her, rather than making a point of incorporating leather widely or acquiring more. At Chatsworth there had been elaborate panelling to decorate the walls and the lack of it at Hardwick, either through choice or, more likely, through financial necessity, meant that Bess had to go on a major tapestry-buying spree during her last visit to London in 1591, even though her purchases show a keen sense of financial acumen and value for money.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ David N. Durant, 'A London Visit, 1591', *History Today*, 24 (1974), 497-503.

Carpets

Carpets, whether for placing over items of furniture or for laying on the floor, are a luxury item, whose function may be carried out by cheaper and simpler cloths or mats. Their inclusion amongst a house's furnishings may therefore be considered as an expression of extravagance. The following table shows Bess's carpets as listed in the 1601 inventory, first for all three houses and then for Hardwick New Hall.

Type	Total	New Hall
Turkey and Turkey-work	46	25
Green cloth	20	5
Rich decorated fabrics	14	7
Needlework	9	9
Blue cloth	9	0
Darnix	6	0
Crewel work	2	2
Stained work (say cloth)	1	1
Say	1	1
Russet cloth	1	0
Fledge	1	0
Total	110	50
Frame to weave carpets	1	

This has been collated from all entries in the 1601 inventory incorporating the word 'carpet', regardless of how the carpet was used. The inventory shows that there was also a large supply of ordinary napery, such as 'too Cubberd clothes of lynnenn too yarde long a peece' or 'a diaper table cloth, three yarde & a half long', and some wrought linen cloths, including a 'Cubberd Cloth wrought with golde and silver and watchet silk & edged with golde and silver', which would have been used on cupboards and tables to protect the carpets.⁹¹ These 'cloths' have not been included in the list above. Bess makes a clear distinction between

⁹¹ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 63.

them and the carpets but this is not mirrored uniformly in other inventories of the period, where very similar items are listed as cloths in one place and carpets in another, which suggests that the terms were more or less interchangeable.

Throughout this section, the word 'carpet' will be used as the general term.

This problem with the language used in inventories may affect the data collected but it is still possible to collate information about carpets from a range of aristocratic inventories and to compare Bess's carpet collection with them. As the following table shows, Bess had one of the larger carpet collections of the period.

Location	No.	Location	No.
Lumley Castle	121	Chatsworth 1601	35
1601 (all three houses)	110	Sheffield Castle	28+
Kenilworth	98	Healaugh	26
Leicester House 1580	92	Hardwick Old Hall	25
Leicester House 1588	72	West Firle	23
New Hall	50	Northaw	23
Syon	47	Chatsworth 1560s	22
Kenninghall	43	Chatsworth 1559	21
Titchfield	43		

Bess's collection is evidently smaller than those of Lord Lumley and Robert Dudley but on a par with that of the Earl of Southampton at Titchfield House, where the inventory is also 1601, and the mid-century Duke of Northumberland at Syon and Duke of Norfolk at Kenninghall.

The greatest part of all these carpet collections was Turkey or Turkey-work carpets. The real Turkey carpets were expensive imported items but many were no doubt purchased second-hand at greatly reduced prices. The probate inventory of Lacock, made on the death of Sir Henry Sharrington in 1575, values one large Turkey carpet at £20, which presumably represents a new carpet, as this

is comparable with the £27 paid for a new carpet by Lord Bergavenny in 1602.⁹² Most of the values quoted in other inventories are considerably lower, diminishing to a few shillings in some cases. This would have been influenced by the size of the carpets, their condition and circumstances particular to the making of each inventory but is more likely to reflect prices on the second-hand market. English Turkey-work carpets, made in imitation of the real things, were an alternative to the imported carpets and were usually cheaper. Santina Levey has defined them as 'a pile wool fabric, knotted in the Turkish manner but on a warp of linen or hemp, instead of wool'.⁹³ Norwich was a centre of this industry but the presence of 'a frame to weyve Carpetes' at Chatsworth suggests that some work, either of creation or mending, was done locally.⁹⁴ Most of the inventories make some distinction between Turkey and Turkey-work but the most emphatic is the 1553 inventory of the Duke of Northumberland's Syon, where what may be identified as Turkey-work is described as 'Englisshe makinge'.⁹⁵ This includes the most expensive item in his collection, which was 'a carpet of Englisshe makinge' priced at one hundred shillings, and so it may be seen that a good Turkey-work carpet was still a considerable investment.⁹⁶ Bess's 1601 inventories also make the distinction between Turkey and Turkey-work carpets, although it is likely that the inventory clerk made a mistake over one of the carpets in the 'lowe great Chamber', which has 'my Ladies Armes in it' and would therefore be more likely to have been commissioned in England.⁹⁷ If this is indeed a mistake, Bess had

⁹² Thelma E. Vernon, 'Inventory of Sir Henry Sherington: Contents of Lacock House, 1575', *Wiltshire Archaeological Society Magazine*, 63 (1968), 72-82, (p.80); Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 26. The Lacock carpet is valued at a remarkably higher price than examples in other inventories examined here.

⁹³ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 27.

⁹⁴ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 23.

⁹⁵ PRO, E 154/2/39, fols 1-36^v. The majority of the carpets are listed in fols 21-2.

⁹⁶ PRO, E 154/2/39, fol. 21^v.

⁹⁷ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 52. Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 27, also comments on this.

seven Turkey-work items in 1601, all of them at the New Hall. However, for the rest of this discussion the word 'Turkey' will be taken to include both Turkey carpets and Turkey-work in order to avoid too much complication.

As inventories vary in their language and degree of descriptiveness and do not all provide valuations, it is impossible to compare collections of Turkey carpets for quality but some quantitative comparison is possible. With that in mind, the following table shows the number of Turkey carpets in each collection and expresses that figure as a percentage of the whole carpet collection.

Location	No. of Turkey or Turkey-work carpets	% of total
Chatsworth 1559	21	100%
Lumley	110	88%
Titchfield	34	79%
Kimberley	10	77%
Leicester House 1580	65	71%
Leicester House 1588	43	60%
Kenilworth	53	53%
Wollaton	8	50%
Hardwick New Hall	25	50%
Syon	23	49%
Condover	5	45%
Kenninghall	19	44%
1601 (all houses)	46	42%
Earl of Surrey at Norwich	4	36%
Lacock	3	33%
Healaugh	8	31%
West Firle	6	26%
Lambeth Palace	7	25%

It appears that the collections at Lumley Castle, Titchfield House and Kimberley were unusual for having such a concentration of Turkey carpets. Bess, with about half her collection at the New Hall made up of them, was more in line with her peers.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ May H. Beattie, 'Antique Rugs at Hardwick Hall', *Oriental Art*, 5 (1959), pp. 52-61, provides a technical study of Bess's Turkey carpets.

The second largest group of carpets at Hardwick was made of needlework. In this, Bess seems to diverge very strongly from the others. The 1601 inventories show nine such carpets and all of them are at the New Hall itself, a sure sign that they were of high value. No other inventory which has been searched has so many. Nine out of the fifty carpets at the New Hall are needlework; the huge royal collection, as inventoried on the death of Henry VIII, has only seven, Wollaton has two out of a total of sixteen carpets, Titchfield four out of forty-three, Healaugh two out of twenty-six. The carpets at Titchfield and Healaugh are all described as being of crewel. Bess had two crewel carpets at the New Hall but separated them in the inventory from the needlework carpets, which are predominantly of higher quality silk. Strangely, there are no needlework carpets listed for Leicester House in 1580 or 1588.⁹⁹

There is no obvious reason for this divergence from the general pattern. Other houses are well supplied with needlework cushions and other soft-furnishings, so there can be no suggestion that it was either an unpopular decorative form or that it was a particularly female technique. Surviving examples, such as the Bradford and Gifford table carpets at the Victoria and Albert Museum, whilst not plentiful, do exist, but it is hard, for example, to find a needlework carpet in a contemporary picture. In the end, it can only have been personal taste that led Bess to make such great use of these carpets.

Portraits of the period do show a large number of carpets of magnificently decorated rich fabrics. Strangely, these do not appear with great frequency in the

⁹⁹ It is difficult to comment on Kenilworth as the published inventory of 1583 summarises the carpets, rather than describing each individually. Of those that are fully transcribed, one is definitely of needlework and one other, 'straunglye wroughte with naked images', may be. I have not seen the original inventory and cannot, therefore, supply the deficiency. The Dudley Papers, fols 1-15; *HMC de L'Isle and Dudley*, pp. 289-90.

inventories.¹⁰⁰ Bess, however, had seven at the New Hall, with another one at the Old Hall and six still at Chatsworth. These included items such as ‘a Carpet for [a square table] of cloth of tyssue and purple wrought velvett, fringed with golde frence lyned with crimson sattin bridges’, which was in the ‘Pearle bed chamber’ at the New Hall.¹⁰¹ The few other inventories which do list similar carpets are mostly from the middle part of the century and include Syon in 1553, which had five of these carpets out of a total of forty-seven carpets, Baynards Castle, where Katherine of Aragon had five out of fifteen in 1536, and the royal collection. The only contemporary of Bess’s who seems to have a good number of these carpets is Robert Dudley, whose Leicester House had thirteen out of a total of ninety-two carpets in 1580 and fifteen out of seventy-two carpets in 1588.¹⁰²

Fortunately, the Leicester House inventory of 1588, as a probate inventory, has values for the items contained in it. This makes it possible to compare the prices of Turkey carpets and those made from decorated rich fabrics, although it might be remembered that probate inventories are usually conservative in their valuing. The fabric carpets include:

a shorte carpett of stripte satten crimson stripe w th gold	50s
a shorte carpett of greene velvett trimd w th a silver lace aboute	
and fringe w th silver and gold	43s 4d
a longe ould carpett of greene velvett, embrodered aboute with a	
border of ragged staves and buttons [and] a shorte	

¹⁰⁰ It is possible that the number of richly decorated carpets in portraits increases at the beginning of the seventeenth century and it would be interesting to see whether there is a greater presence in the inventories of that period. Unfortunately, that detection work lies outside this study.

¹⁰¹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 44.

¹⁰² The Dudley Papers, fols 7^v-8^v; Kingsford, ‘Essex House’, *passim*. Kenilworth has some of these richly wrought carpets but it is difficult to quantify them because of the limits of the published transcript. Only carpets where the ground itself is decorated, rather than merely being fringed, have been counted.

carpett suteable	£7
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Amongst the Turkey carpets which might be thought comparable in size are:

a square table carpett of turquoy stuffe	30s
v turquoy Windowe Carpettes	20s
a long foote Turquoy carpett	£3 6s 8d. ¹⁰³

Apart from certain particularly good or large Turkey carpets, the rich fabric carpets seem to be more expensive. They must also have been considerably less hardwearing and have needed more care.¹⁰⁴

The higher value of the fabric carpets and, it may reasonably be suggested, the needlework carpets, is reflected in the locations in which Bess displayed them at the New Hall. Her rich fabric carpets are to be found in the 'Turret Chamber' (2), 'Pearle bed chamber', 'little Chamber within the best bed-chamber' (2), 'ladie Arbells Chamber' and one in store in the 'wardrop'.¹⁰⁵ With the obvious exception of the last, these are all rooms of quality but they are not the best rooms. Instead, it is the needlework carpets which are to be found in the 'best bed Chamber' (2), 'with drawing Chamber' (2), 'high great Chamber' and 'Gallerie', that is, in the best rooms, as well as examples in 'ladie Arbells Chamber' and the 'Pearle bed chamber'.¹⁰⁶ In all these rooms the carpets of both types are placed over tables and cupboards. There is clearly a hierarchy in which rich fabric carpets come second to needlework in Bess's display.

The Turkey carpets are the 'workhorses' of the collection. As coverings for pieces of furniture they appear throughout the house and most of them were

¹⁰³ Kingsford, 'Essex House', passim. The figures of the prices have been modernised for easier comparison.

¹⁰⁴ It may be noted that at £10, Dudley's large Persian carpet was the most expensive of all in 1588 (Kingsford, 'Essex House', p. 38).

¹⁰⁵ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 43, 46, 54 and 44.

¹⁰⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 45, 47, 48 and 43.

probably of moderate size, since they cover cupboards and square tables. It is known that at Chatsworth in 1559 Bess had two large Turkey carpets, twenty-one and fifteen feet long, which should have survived until the 1601 inventory.¹⁰⁷ The incomplete inventory of the 1560s also lists two large Turkey carpets but does not give dimensions.¹⁰⁸ How they were disposed, if they were indeed present at Hardwick, is unknown. There were four carpets at Hardwick large enough to cover long tables in the 'high great Chamber', 'lowe great Chamber' (2) and 'little dyning Chamber'.¹⁰⁹ The 'long table of white wood' in the 'high great Chamber' also had 'an other fayre long Carpet for it of silk nedlework with gold frence, lyned with Crimson taffetie sarcenet' which was probably exhibited only on the most important occasions.¹¹⁰ The 'little dyning Chamber', which is now known as the Paved Room, is a small room and must have been dominated by the long drawing table with its Turkey carpet. As the furnishings continue with 'a Chare of turkie worke [and] a stoole of turkie worke', only leavened by fourteen joined stools, the scheme in that room must have been formed very strongly by the Turkey work.¹¹¹

The 'little dyning Chamber' did not, however, have a Turkey carpet on the floor. Of the twenty-five Turkey carpets at the New Hall, nine are foot or floor carpets. Carpets were an expensive commodity and were only rarely used as floor coverings. To do so implied status to the person who would tread on them. At the New Hall they are concentrated in the best suite of rooms, the 'best bed Chamber', 'with drawing chamber', 'high great Chamber' and 'Gallerie', and in

¹⁰⁷ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 10. Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick Drawers, H/143/2; cf. Appendix Two.

¹⁰⁸ Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick Drawers, H/143/6, fols 1 and 3; cf. Appendix Three.

¹⁰⁹ *Of Household Stuff*, pp. 47 and 52.

¹¹⁰ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 47.

¹¹¹ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 52.

rooms where Bess herself might be an occasional but symbolic presence, the 'upper Chapple', 'lowe great Chamber' and 'my Ladies with drawing Chamber'. In the 'best bed Chamber' the inventory specifically notes that the three foot carpets are 'to laye about the bed', where they would add to the magnificence of that structure.¹¹² Most inventories are not so specific about the positioning of foot carpets but a similar style was followed at Titchfield, where three Turkey foot carpets in 'the kings Chamber' were also 'for y^e bedd' and three more were listed with the bed furnishings in 'the Quenes Chamber', and at Leicester House in 1588, where there were 'three ould foote turquoy carpettes under the Bedsteed' in Lord Warwick's chamber.¹¹³

Of the six remaining foot Turkey carpets at Hardwick, four are strongly connected with chairs which may be associated with Bess's special use. These are in the 'with drawing Chamber', 'high great Chamber', 'Gallerie' and 'my Ladies with drawing Chamber'.¹¹⁴ Throughout the inventory it is customary to list carpets for particular items of furniture directly after that piece of furniture. This is also the case with chairs, where their cushion and foot carpets, if present, follow directly after the mention of the chair itself. The inventory entry for the 'with drawing Chamber', for example, has

a drawing table Carved and guilt standing uppon sea doges inlayde with marble stones and wood, a Carpet for it of nedleworke of the storie of David and Saule with a golde frence and trymmed with blewe taffetie sarcenet, a Cubberd with tills Carved and guilt, a Carpet for it of nedleworke with golde frence lyned with taffety sarcenet, A nedleworke Chare with golde and grene silk frence, a

¹¹² *Of Household Stuff*, p. 45. The best bed itself is discussed below in the section on beds.

¹¹³ PRO, LR 1/10, fols 21-6^v (fols 21^v and 22); Kingsford, 'Essex House', p. 35.

¹¹⁴ *Of Household Stuff*, pp. 47, 48 and 53.

footestoole of oring tawnie velvet set with nedleworke slips and
oring tawnie frence, a foote Carpet of turkie worke, a lowe
nedleworke stoole.¹¹⁵

Although the foot carpet is not described as 'for' the chair, this association would fit the pattern of connecting carpets with pieces of furniture shown elsewhere in the passage. This was the only chair in that prestigious room, which was otherwise furnished with elaborate stools, and the foot carpet would have emphasised its importance further. The association of the other three foot carpets with particular chairs in other rooms is based on the same principle drawn from the inventory listing. The 'Chare of nedlework with golde and silk frence' in the 'high great Chamber', like the previous example, is also alone amongst stools and forms.¹¹⁶ There are three chairs in the 'Gallerie' – all, incidentally, of needlework – but only one appears to be associated with a footstool and the foot carpet, which would give emphasis to that one chair. Of the surprisingly large number of five chairs in 'my Ladies with drawing Chamber', one appears more important than the others and that is the one associated with the footstool and foot carpet:

a Chare of black lether guilded, a footestoole of wood, a foote
turkie Carpet, a little Chare of wrought cloth of gold with gold and
red silk frence, a Chare of turkie worke, too Chares for Children.¹¹⁷

The practice of associating one chair with a foot carpet is shown in the Unton portrait (National Portrait Gallery 710), in the section dealing with Sir Henry's birth, where his mother's chair is shown placed on a foot carpet which barely extends beyond the chair itself. It would be easy to assume that this association of

¹¹⁵ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 46.

¹¹⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 48.

¹¹⁷ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 53.

foot carpets with chairs means that the foot carpets are small but the 1601 inventories do not give the sizes of the carpets.

The nine remaining items listed as carpets in the 1601 New Hall inventory are of much lower status and are surely to be considered as little more than functional. These include five carpets of green cloth, one of which was lightly decorated, a carpet of stained work, two carpets of crewel and one of say. None of these was in a prominent place. It is obvious that the vast majority of Bess's ordinary carpets had been left behind at the Old Hall and Chatsworth and only her more elaborate carpets had been brought to the showcase at the New Hall.

Unlike many other parts of the collection, there is scant documentary evidence about how Bess acquired her carpets but a few points may be deduced. As discussed above, some of the Turkey carpets at Hardwick may be supposed to have been in Bess's possession at the earlier Chatsworth in mid-century. Santina Levey has noted that George Talbot had links with merchants engaged in trade with the Levant and he could have been a source for Turkey carpets acquired during the 1570s.¹¹⁸ Legend also suggests that Henry Cavendish could have brought carpets home for his mother from his journey across Europe to Constantinople but there is nothing to prove this romantic suggestion.¹¹⁹ That there was some domestic carpet production is implied by the presence at Chatsworth in 1601 of 'a frame to weyve Carpetes' in 'a little vawte there' but there is no way of knowing whether this had been in recent use or was a remainder from earlier times.¹²⁰ The needlework carpets are probably survivors from the later Chatsworth period in the 1570s, when that house was significantly

¹¹⁸ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 28 and notes.

¹¹⁹ 'Mr. Harrie Cavendish His Journey To and From Constantinople, 1589. By Fox, his servant', ed. by A.C. Wood, *Camden Miscellany*, 3rd series, 64 (1940), i-x, 1-29.

¹²⁰ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 23.

enlarged and refurnished. Two surviving examples are clearly dated but cannot be identified in the 1601 inventory. The *Judgement of Paris* table carpet bears the date 1574 (illustration 31) and the *Tobias* table carpet 1579.¹²¹ Both indicate the quality of Bess's commission at this time but they date from a period for which the household accounts are almost silent. There are accounts for the period of the 1590s in which Hardwick was being furnished and equipped but it is notable that they have almost no entries relating to carpets. In February 1596 there is a reference to ten shillings given to a carpet maker and his wife but no mention of the work they did, and on 17 December 1597 there is a note of a payment of £10 'for xx^{tie} yards of grasse greene Cloth for Carpetts at x^s the yarde'.¹²² There is nothing, however, to suggest that Bess made many purchases of carpets for her new house comparable to the way in which she acquired extra tapestries for it, and it must be assumed, therefore, that her collection was sufficient for her needs.

Hardly anything now remains of this large carpet collection. There are three Turkey carpets still at Hardwick which, by their dates, may be survivors of the original furnishings but, as the 1601 inventory gives no dimensions for the carpets, it is impossible to check this. Subsequent owners of the house have also brought Turkey carpets into it and there is evidence that this started with William, first Earl of Devonshire, in the years immediately following his mother's death.¹²³ None of the decorated rich fabric carpets has survived. Of the needlework carpets,

¹²¹ Holroyd, 'Embroidered Rhetoric', pp. 135-6, makes some interesting comments about the iconography of the *Judgement of Paris* table carpet, a piece which is not considered in the following chapter of this study. She discusses the image in the context of Bess's persona and comments: 'It may be that this iconographical statement of conjugal vows is connected in some way with the embroidered date 1574'. It could be relevant to note that 1574 was the year in which Elizabeth Cavendish married Charles Stuart and it might be productive to review Holroyd's material in the light of a possible association with this union rather than with Bess herself.

¹²² Hardwick MS 7, fols 145 and 200.

¹²³ Beattie, 'Antique Rugs', p. 61. Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick MS 29 contains several references to the purchase of carpets by William Cavendish at this period – for example pp. 144 and 147 – but it is rare to be certain for which property he is buying them.

only two may now be identified with those in the 1601 inventory. Parts of the 'rose and antickes' carpet, which was originally in 'the best bed Chamber', have now been remounted in a different configuration (illustration 32). A needlework panel with the Hardwick arms in the centre may be the table carpet 'with my Ladies Armes in the midst' from the 'Gallerie'. Frustratingly, there are several other needlework table and cupboard carpets in the house which are certainly contemporary but cannot be identified in the inventory. In some cases this may be due to the lack of description in the inventory but it is difficult to imagine that the huge *Tobias* table carpet (approximately 6.7 metres in length), which carries inset scenes of the story of Tobias, as well as Hardwick and Talbot heraldic motifs, and rich borders of trophies, garlands, fruit and other details, would not have been noted in detail had it been in one of the Hardwicks or Chatsworth in 1601 (illustration 33). This is easily the most significant needlework carpet associated with Bess and is probably also the most important needlework carpet to have survived from the late sixteenth century.

Study of Bess's carpets shows that she had one of the larger collections of the period, although well behind the royal collection and those of Lord Lumley and Robert Dudley. As with many of her contemporaries, the bulk of her collection consisted of Turkey or Turkey-work carpets but she was unusual in the number of needlework and richly decorated fabric carpets which she owned. Consideration of how these were deployed around Hardwick reveals a hierarchy with needlework carpets at the top, followed by the fabric examples. Carpets were also used by her to emphasise the status of certain pieces of furniture, especially the best bed and certain chairs which she, or her most important guest, might occupy.

Beds

Beds are one of the most emphatic ways of bridging the potential gap between textiles and furniture. In all but the most humble examples, a bed would dominate the room in which it was placed, especially when the bed was hung with textiles. As well as having a practical function, beds could be used for displays of wealth, social status, taste, loyalty and family ties. This study will consider the form of the beds at Hardwick, their dispersal around the house, their hangings, and the relationship between beds and other furnishings.

The 1601 inventories list a total of 168 beds across the three houses. None of these survives. This figure includes all beds where there is some form of structure or bedstead and does not include the large number of servants' mattresses and pallets which were entirely functional. These latter types of bed were, above all, mobile and could be removed or concealed when not in use, leaving no lasting mark on the appearance of the main rooms of the houses.

The following table shows the types of bed structures at the Hardwick Halls and Chatsworth.

Type	New Hall	Old Hall	Chatsworth	Total
Bedstead	16	32	72	120
Decorated	11	15	0	26
Field	2	2	4	8
Folding	0	1	0	1
Painted	0	0	4	4
Plain	1	1	3	5
Servant	0	0	1	1
<i>to turne up like a Chest</i>	3	0	0	3
Total	33	51	84	168

By far the greatest number is those described simply as bedsteads, which is here defined as those where there is no indication of the appearance of the

wooden structure itself. Those bed structures which the inventory describes as 'plain' could well be put in the same category but have, at least, been given some qualifying adjective. At the New Hall, ordinary bedsteads appear in store in 'one of the turretes on the leades', and in use in 'the utter Chamber to the Turret Chamber', 'the servantes Chamber next to the wardrop', 'Tobies Chamber', 'My Ladies Bed Chamber' (2), 'my ladie Arbells Chamber', 'Mr. William Cavendishe's Chamber', 'Mrs. Knyveton's Chamber', 'the Chamber betwene the pantrie and the Nurserie', 'a little roome betwene the Chapple and the hale', 'a Chamber within the Pantrie' and 'the little turret at the south side of the Court'.¹²⁴ It is obviously too simple to assume that these bedsteads were only associated with lower status rooms, as their locations include the chief family rooms belonging to Bess, her son William and grand-daughter Arbella, the room of an upper servant and relative, Mrs. Knyveton, and 'Tobies Chamber', a room of some status on the first floor. The factor that differentiates these beds from the others in the list of 'bedsteads' is that they are associated with hangings. Indeed, in the case of 'Tobies Chamber' and one of the bedsteads in 'My Ladies Bed Chamber', the structure of the bed is actually closely covered or wrapped with textiles:

[Tobies Chamber:] a bedsted with head and postes covered with
Cloth of golde, cloth of silver and oring coloured velvet

[my Ladies Bed Chamber:] a bedsted, the postes being Covered
with scarlet layd on with silver lace.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 42, 43, 50, 53-7.

¹²⁵ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 50 and 53.

At the Old Hall the majority of 'bedsteads' are clearly of low status, except for two which are associated with hangings, one in 'my Ladies Chamber' and one in the 'utter chamber to my Ladies olde bed Chamber'.¹²⁶ As in the New Hall, Bess's own bed has fabric covering part of the structure of the bed:

a bedsted with postes Covered with purple velvet imbrodered with purple twyste and lace.¹²⁷

At Chatsworth, where the inventory is less substantial, only fourteen of the seventy-two 'bedsteads' are associated with hangings, although these are not in most cases elaborate ensembles. Once again, the bed in 'my Ladies bed Chamber' has covered posts, this time with 'black wrought velvett'.¹²⁸

In the table above, 'decorated' beds form the second largest group at the two Hardwick Halls. These are defined as examples where the inventory provides information about the decoration of the bed structure itself, indicating techniques associated with woodworking, as opposed to the 'bedsteads', for which no description is offered. The decorated beds at Hardwick New Hall are to be found in 'one of the turretes on the leades', that is, in store, the 'stayre Chamber', 'greene bed Chamber', 'Turret Chamber', 'gallery Chamber', 'Pearle bed chamber', 'best bed Chamber', 'servantes Chamber to the best bed Chamber', 'Shipp bed Chamber', 'Jacobs Chamber' and 'Chamber at the end of the walke'.¹²⁹ Unsurprisingly, with the exception of the store and the 'Chamber at the end of the walke', these are all rooms of considerable status and include the 'best bed Chamber', which will be discussed below. Inevitably, all the decorated beds except for the stored one are associated with bed hangings.

¹²⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 38.

¹²⁷ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 38.

¹²⁸ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 27.

¹²⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 42, 43, 45, 46, 50, 51 and 55.

The decorated elements of the bed structures are described in the 1601 inventory in a number of different ways. These are listed in the following tables:

Decorated beds at the New Hall	No.
Posts turned and carved and the head inlaid	1
Posts turned	1
Head and posts carved and gilt	1
White wood with head and posts turned and carved	1
Head and posts carved, gilt and inlaid	1
Carved and gilt	3
Gilt	1
Posts carved and head inlaid	1
Head and posts carved	1
(One field bed is also carved and gilt)	

Decorated beds at the Old Hall	No.
Turned posts	4
Turned posts, fluted	1
Carved and inlaid	2
Head and postes gilt and inlaid	1
Fluted posts	2
Seeled with tester of wood and turned posts	1
Carved and gilt	1
Head carved and gilt and posts turned and gilded	1
Head and tester seeled	1
Seeled	1

Decorated beds at Chatsworth

None

(The four painted beds at Chatsworth have been listed separately in the table on page 114 but might be considered amongst those above.)

The techniques represented here are turning, carving, inlay and gilding.¹³⁰ Turning and carving are the basics of these decorated beds. Inlay, which might be supposed to be more precious, only appears in six bedsteads, three in each of the Hardwick Halls. This includes the 'bed Chamber the best lodging' at the Old Hall, but none of the other inlaid beds is in a particularly prominent position, which is

¹³⁰ For discussion of these decorative techniques, see Victor Chinnery, *Oak Furniture: The British Tradition* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1979), pp. 168-218.

in marked contrast to Bess's enthusiasm for inlaid panelling and furniture, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter.¹³¹ The Old Hall best bed is also gilded and it is these gilt beds which can be found in the most important rooms of the New Hall, the 'best bed Chamber' and 'Pearle bed chamber', and in the 'Greene bed Chamber', 'gallery Chamber', 'Shipp bed Chamber', 'Prodigall Chamber' and 'servantes Chamber to the best bed Chamber', which are all rooms of good quality.¹³² This seems to be evidence of a distinct pattern of usage. Gilt beds are not common, even in aristocratic inventories of the time. Most houses do not have any but there were three at Temple Newsam in 1565, including the bed in the Earl of Lennox's Chamber, and Lord Lumley possessed four gilded beds in 1590, but this is a small number amongst his total of sixty-seven beds.¹³³ Of Bess's thirty-three beds at the New Hall, seven were gilded. The closest parallel to this was at Kenilworth in 1583, where six out of thirty-four beds were gilded and one more was silvered.¹³⁴ All appear to have splendid hangings but the Kenilworth inventory is not arranged on a room-by-room basis so it is impossible to tell whether Dudley, too, used gilded beds in his best rooms.

The descriptions of beds in Bess's inventory are frustrating because they offer something to the imagination but do not allow full reconstruction of the bed structures. With these bed structures, as with most of the furniture, the descriptions are much less detailed than those of textiles. This is illustrated particularly clearly in the Chatsworth of 1559, where it is apparent that the word 'bed' is used as the name for the ensemble of textile hangings and other

¹³¹ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 35.

¹³² *Of Household Stuff*, pp. 45, 43, 42, 43, 50, 55 and 46.

¹³³ E.W. Crossley, 'A Templenewsam Inventory, 1565', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 25 (1920), 91-103 (p. 96); Lionel Cust, 'The Lumley Inventories', *Walpole Society*, 6 (1917-18), 15-35 (p. 29).

¹³⁴ *HMC de L'Isle and Dudley*, pp. 279-85.

accoutrements, and that the bedstead is a separate item, listed alongside chairs, stools and cushions.¹³⁵ There are several reasons why this disparity of description should occur but primarily the bedsteads themselves were less expensive than the textiles with which they were hung and were therefore less important in the realistic, fiscal world of inventories. There appear to be no surviving records relating to beds at Hardwick to demonstrate this but examples can be found in other inventories of the period. At Temple Newsam the bed in the Earl of Lennox's bedchamber, mentioned above, was appraised in this way:

A tester of clothe of golde & purple velvett wth tharmys of
Englande imbrodered & curtens of cremysyn damaske, xl^{li},
a quylyt of chaungeable silke and velvett, vj^{li} xiiij^s iiij^d,
[...], one bedcouerynge of redd frese, vj^s viij^d,
[...], a barge bedstede parcell giltt, vj^{li}.¹³⁶

At Sir Roger Wodehouse's mansion at Kimberley, Norfolk, in 1588, a 'posted bedstead w^t cords' was valued at ten shillings, whilst its associated hangings, 'a testure of Crimson velvett w^t y^e armes of S^r Roger Woodhouse & vj curteyns of doble sarcenet & vallence of Red veluet fringed w^t red silke', were valued at forty shillings.¹³⁷ In each case the textiles are significantly more valuable than the bedstead.

Amongst the limitations of Bess's inventory descriptions of beds is that almost none of the woods from which the bed structures are made is identified,

¹³⁵ Hardwick Drawers, H/143/2; cf. Appendix Two.

¹³⁶ Crossley, 'A Templenewsam Inventory', p. 96.

¹³⁷ Leonard G. Bolingbroke, 'Two Elizabethan Inventories', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 15 (1902), 91-108 (p. 98). The surviving parts of these hangings are in the Burrell Collection, Glasgow. The artefact is now known as the Kimberley Throne and is a composite piece with additional sections. By tradition, the throne is associated with Queen Elizabeth I's visit to Kimberley whilst on her Progress of 1578. Glasgow Museums: The Burrell Collection. Registration number 14.217. I am grateful to Patricia Collins of Glasgow Museums for information about this piece.

whereas, by comparison, the identification of each textile fabric type is rarely omitted. It would be reasonable to assume that oak was the predominant wood, although the mention of inlaid items suggests the presence of at least small amounts of other woods such as the fruit woods.¹³⁸ A bedstead in the 'Turret Chamber' is described as being of 'white wood', which probably denotes one of the deals, a group of softwoods including pine, usually employed for furniture of lower quality.¹³⁹ Walnut is a timber which appears for beds with reasonable frequency in other aristocratic inventories of the period, such as Titchfield House, Leicester House and Kenilworth, but is not identified for that purpose in Bess's inventories.¹⁴⁰ Nor does her inventory identify the patterns or images with which the beds are decorated. In this particular, Bess's inventory is less informative than others, such as the one for Kenilworth Castle in 1583. In that inventory some of the decorated beds are described in more detail. For example:

A faire, riche, newe, standing, square bedstedd of walnuttre, all painted over with crymson and silvered with roses, fowre bears and ragged staves all sylvered, standing upon the corners [the description of the hangings follows in every case]¹⁴¹

A felde bedstedd of wallnutttree, topp fashion, the pillars and beddested carved and varnished parcell gilte, my Lord's Armes painted therein, and the beare and ragged staffe embossed at the topp¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Chinnery, *Oak Furniture*, pp. 193-98.

¹³⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 43; Chinnery, *Oak Furniture*, p. 164.

¹⁴⁰ PRO, LR 1/10, vol. 10, fols 21-26^v; Kingsford, 'Essex House', pp. 28-41; *HMC de L'Isle and Dudley*, p. 279-85. At Kenilworth, twenty-five of Dudley's thirty-four beds were of walnut.

¹⁴¹ *HMC de L'Isle and Dudley*, p. 279.

¹⁴² *HMC de L'Isle and Dudley*, p. 280.

A Venice beddestede, with iiij Armes carved with men and women¹⁴³

Bess's beds may well not have been so elaborate but her interest in French furniture, including ornate pieces such as the 'sea doges' table, which will be discussed in the following section of this chapter, means that it is impossible to rule out the possibility of her possessing sophisticated beds of this type.

The remaining bed structures in Bess's inventories are less elaborate. They include eight field beds, two of which were at Hardwick New Hall and two at the Old Hall, whilst the remaining four were at Chatsworth. This is quite a small number by comparison with other inventories. Field beds were essentially beds for travel and could be relatively easily erected or dismantled. As Peter Thornton has written, they 'were first and foremost practical pieces of furniture'.¹⁴⁴ This practicality made them useful not only when travelling but also for moving around a house to give flexibility to the organisation of accommodation. Bess's field beds were not particularly modest in appearance, but they were possibly smaller in size than her other important bed structures as the field beds at the New Hall were placed in two of the smaller chambers, the 'Prodigall Chamber' and the 'little Chamber within the best bed-chamber', both of which are in turrets.¹⁴⁵ All Bess's field beds were associated with textile hangings and there were several sets of hangings for field beds in store in the 'wardrop' at the Old Hall. Several of the field beds had decorated structures: the bedstead in the 'Prodigall Chamber' was

¹⁴³ *HMC de L'Isle and Dudley*, p. 283.

¹⁴⁴ Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration*, p. 153.

¹⁴⁵ *Of Household Stuff*, pp. 55 and 46. It is more difficult to assess the sizes of the rooms at the Old Hall and Chatsworth as neither building survives intact.

‘Carved and guilt’, one at the Old Hall had ‘head & turned postes’, and another had a ‘bedes head inlayed and postes Carved’.¹⁴⁶

Of the thirty-three bed structures in Hardwick Hall, eighteen, or 54%, are associated with bed hangings. This proportion outweighs both Chatsworth (31%) and the Old Hall (27%) and emphasises the superiority of the New Hall as a showcase for Bess’s status. Most of these beds have the customary hangings consisting of tester, headcloth, upper valance (single or double), curtains and coverlet. Only two, those in the ‘Turret Chamber’ and ‘little Chamber within the best bed-chamber’, have lower valances or ‘Pantes to goe about the sides of the bed at the bottome’.¹⁴⁷ The fact that the inventory-taker chose to explain the purpose and position of these pieces is indicative of their rarity at that time. Peter Thornton has noted that in French, ‘the word “pentes” was given to the four panels, fitted to rich table-carpets, that fell down the sides of the table; the same term must sometimes have been used to denote the lower valances of a bed, as here, although the usual French name for these was “soubassements”’.¹⁴⁸ Presumably on most beds the integral sides of the coverlet would have been long enough to hang over the edge of the bed and camouflage the lower structure and so there was no need for separate hangings. It is notable that the two beds with ‘pantes’ are unusual in not having counterpoints or coverings listed for them.

In addition to the complete beds standing around the Hall, there were hangings for seven more beds in store, five in the wardrobe at the Old Hall and just two at the New Hall. This would not give much opportunity for Bess to vary the hangings on her beds as she had very little in reserve, a situation similar to that

¹⁴⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 55, 34, and 36.

¹⁴⁷ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 43.

¹⁴⁸ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 16.

shown earlier for wall-hangings. One bed does, however, clearly have two sets of hangings available for it:

In the Shipp bed Chamber: [...] the ship bedsted Carved and guilt, a tester and bedes head of red cloth with black lace and black silk frence, fowre Curtins of red cloth with black lace, an other tester of linnen cloth wrought with silke of divers Coulers with a brode parchment lace of golde and a golde frence about it, fowre Curtins and bedes head of linnen cloth wrought sutable to the same, [...] a Counterpoynt of imbroderie and nedleworke with Cloth of golde and divers other stuffes and with a golde frence, a Counterpoynt of red Cloth with yellowe silke frence.¹⁴⁹

This could be an example illustrating Thornton's suggestion that alternative suites of hangings could be provided for winter and summer wear, although it should be noted that he only tentatively assigns this to the period around 1600, whilst proving that it was common in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.¹⁵⁰ It is tempting to allocate red hangings to winter and the apparently lighter wrought linen to summer but there does not seem to be enough evidence from elsewhere in Bess's inventories, or other people's, to confirm that this is anything other than a modern suggestion. The addition of gold lace, gold fringe and cloth of gold to the wrought linen set, all of which are quite heavy when present in quantity, would have added weight to the apparently lighter hangings. Whilst it is logical to suppose that paler, if not lighter, bed hangings would be preferable in summer, there is no obvious reason why this particular room should be so chosen. It is at

¹⁴⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 50.

¹⁵⁰ Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration*, p. 106. As noted above, Thornton suggests that the two sets of hangings for the High Great Chamber at Hardwick in 1601 may have been for winter and summer use.

the northern end of the building and its two windows face north and west, although the western window is in the shadow of one of the large projecting towers. It is not a room into which natural heat and light penetrate very readily, although its position over the kitchens may have had an effect. The emphatic lack of light in the room would not have made it a priority to preserve the textiles from the fading and destructive effects of the sun.

Although the two sets of hangings are quite different from each other in appearance, they do have two strange similarities. Neither set has valances, which is almost unique amongst the beds at the New Hall, the only other exceptions being the two bedsteads with canopies associated with Bess's grand-daughter, Arbella, where the structure renders it unnecessary to have valances. The 'Shipp bed' is also the only one to have four curtains.¹⁵¹ This number of curtains, together with the absence of valances, is reminiscent of the so-called 'French beds', which were to become popular between 1620 and 1680.¹⁵² In these beds the curtains were attached directly to the top rails and were raised vertically and secured with cords rather than pulled horizontally, and therefore had no need for valances to hide the action of curtain rings pulled along a rod or to fill the gaps left by such an action. This method is evocative of the furling of sails on a ship, which could have suggested the name 'Shipp bed', but it seems unlikely, however, that the conservative Bess would have preceded fashion in this way and it is perhaps more probable that the unusual bed hangings were necessary because of the unusual shape of the bed. The inventory refers to the room as 'the Shipp bed Chamber'. In itself, this need not refer to the bed but could refer to some other

¹⁵¹ In his essay which has appeared in all the published editions of the Hardwick inventory, Peter Thornton refers to five curtains for this bed. However, all versions of the inventory mention only four. The majority of the other beds had five curtains, a few had only three and the best bed, the most luxurious, had six.

¹⁵² Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration*, p. 160.

aspect of the room's decoration. The adjacent 'Tobies Chamber', for example, is so named because it contains 'tapestry hangings of the storie of Tobie'.¹⁵³ However, this bed in the 'Shipp bed Chamber' is described as 'the ship bedsted Carved and guilt' and is the only bed to be given a descriptive name, which strengthens the suggestion that the bed itself was ship-like. It is impossible to suggest, however, in what manner the bed was ship-like, as there are no further descriptions of it and certainly no pictures. English inventories of the period do not contain examples of beds resembling other objects, although the barge bedstead belonging to the Earl of Lennox, which has already been mentioned, might possibly be an example, even if there is no clear definition of the meaning of 'barge' in this case.¹⁵⁴

Whilst the discussion of the 'Shipp bed' has mostly been about its form and the presence of two sets of hangings specifically for it, the hangings also provide an example of co-ordinated textiles, where the various parts of the ensemble, the valances, curtains, tester and headcloth, appear to be of matching, or at least very similar, fabric and decoration. This was to become the fashion later in the seventeenth century and it is worth exploring whether Bess was in advance of fashion or merely made accidental use of co-ordinated hangings, whose importance should not be overstated.

This co-ordination appears in seven of the eighteen beds associated with hangings. In addition to the 'Shipp bed Chamber', these are in the 'stayre Chamber', 'greene bed Chamber', 'Jacobs Chamber', 'my Ladies Bed Chamber',

¹⁵³ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 50.

¹⁵⁴ The editor of the Temple Newsam inventory suggested that the barge bedstead was 'perhaps a four post bedstead, so called from its resemblance to the covered part of a state barge.' Crossley, 'A Templenewsam Inventory', p. 96, n. 10. Geoffrey Beard, *Upholsterers and Interior Furnishing in England 1530-1840* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 28, describes it as 'perhaps a four-post boat-shaped [bedstead]'.

‘my ladie Arbells Chamber’ and ‘Mr. William Cavendishe’s Chamber’. The bed in Cavendish’s room is described as:

a bedsted, a tester, bedes head and single vallans of blewe cloth
sticht with white with blewe and white silk frence, fyve Curtins of
blewe cloth sticht with white thred.¹⁵⁵

That in the ‘stayre Chamber’ is very similar:

a bedsted with turned postes, a tester and double vallans of blewe
cloth sticht with white with blewe and white silk frence, Fyve
Curtins of blewe cloth sticht with white, a newe Coverlett of blewe
cloth.¹⁵⁶

The blue theme is continued in ‘Jacobs Chamber’:

a tester, bedes head an vallans of blewe cloth layde with black silk
lace and the vallans with black silk frence, fyve Curtins of blewe
cloth with black silk knottes.¹⁵⁷

In each case, there appears to be a high degree of co-ordination within each set of bed-hangings.

It is difficult to ignore the fact that each of these beds has furnishings of blue cloth and not to wonder whether this is more than coincidence. No definite record of the purchase of this fabric is known and so it cannot be proved whether the beds were dressed at the same time.¹⁵⁸ The reference to ‘a newe Coverlett of blewe cloth’ for the bed in the ‘stayre Chamber’ suggests that the rest of the hangings are older and there is no reason to suppose that these beds had been

¹⁵⁵ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 55.

¹⁵⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 42.

¹⁵⁷ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 51.

¹⁵⁸ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 32 and n. 55, draws attention to twenty-two yards of blue cloth bought for £11 in April 1592 but observes that it may have been bought ‘for the liveries of Bess’s servants, which were of blue cloth’. Twenty-two yards of fabric would certainly not go far in the furnishing of beds.

furnished especially for the new house. Indeed, there are further examples of blue beds at the Old Hall, in the 'Inner Chamber to the Corner Chamber over Mr. Cavendishes Chamber':

a tester and bedes head of blewe cloth, single vallans of blewe cloth, layde on with white bone lace fringed with white and blewe silk, fyve Curtins of blewe Cloth sutable,

and in 'Mr. Manners his Chamber':

a tester and bedeshead of blewe cloth sticht with white and single vallans with white and blewe silk frence, fyve Curtins of blewe cloth sticht with white.¹⁵⁹

Even at Chatsworth, whose inventory shows a much-diminished house, there is one 'tester and Curtins of blewe cloth fringed and laced' and this is in the 'middle gatehouse Chamber', which does not appear to be a room of much pretension.¹⁶⁰

Chatsworth also supplies evidence of the continuation of a blue theme in a room other than a bedroom. The 'blewe gallerie' contains:

eleven peeces of blewe cloth hanginges sticht with white, a Court Cubberd a square borde too Carpetes of blewe cloth sticht with white a forme Covered with blewe Cloth.¹⁶¹

There are also several individual 'blewe cloth' items spread across Chatsworth without any obvious grouping, including carpets, another set of hangings, forms and a stool. Finally, the Old Hall has one more carpet and the New Hall has two square cushions and a close stool. With the exception of the bed in the 'middle gatehouse Chamber' and the set of hangings in store in the 'middle wardrop', all the 'blewe cloth' items at Chatsworth are on the first floor. It is tempting to

¹⁵⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 37.

¹⁶⁰ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 22.

¹⁶¹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 25.

suggest that all these items, dispersed through the three houses by 1601, may originally have been grouped together and provided some degree of colour co-ordination on the first floor at Chatsworth, based on blue, the family's livery colour. If this is indeed the case, Bess did not choose to perpetuate the scheme and presumably, therefore, did not consider it to be of importance.

Geoffrey Beard has written that 'overall, an *en suite* look was not yet common in interiors' at this period, although it was starting to be found in a few examples.¹⁶² The blue colour scheme discussed above raises the question of how far Bess showed any interest in an *en suite* look. This may be explored further by considering the two remaining bedrooms with co-ordinated bed hangings, Bess's own bedroom and the 'greene bed Chamber', and comparing them with the most magnificent bedchambers, the 'Pearle bed chamber' and the 'best bed Chamber' itself, the rooms in which Bess might be expected to make the most public statements of her good taste or concern for fashion.

Bess's own bed chamber is revealed by the 1601 inventory to have been a very full, even a cluttered, space, where individual objects might be of note but the overall effect is hardly one of show or magnificence. Bess's bed is described as:

a bedsted, the postes being Covered with scarlet layd on with silver lace, bedes head, tester and single vallans of scarlet, the vallans imbrodered with golde studes and thissells, stript downe and layde about with golde and silver lace and with golde frence about, three

¹⁶² Beard, *Upholsterers*, p. 31. Beard was writing in the context of a discussion of the 1590 inventory of Sir Charles Morison's houses at Cassiobury, Hertfordshire, and Fleet Street, London. In both these places Beard was able to deduce a 'preoccupation with a yellow and black colour scheme'.

Curtins of scarlet stript downe with silver lace and with silver and red silk buttons and lowpes, fyve Curtins of purple bayes.¹⁶³

The baize curtains were to provide extra warmth for the old lady's bed and must have hung inside the 'three Curtins of scarlet'. The external appearance of the bed would therefore have been scarlet cloth, which was a very expensive woollen cloth, usually of a bright red colour, decorated with gold and silver. This was complemented by

too Curtins of red Cloth for the windowes, [...] a Covering for the russet sattin Chare of scarlet imbrodered with flowers of petepoynt, a stoole and a footestoole of scarlet sutable to the same.¹⁶⁴

There is some degree of co-ordination between the bed and some of the furniture in the room but this apparent continuity is weakened when compared with the rest of the textiles in that room, which most certainly do not reinforce the idea:

too peeces of tapestrie hanginges with personages and forrest worke, [...] eight fledges about the bed, [...] three Coverletes to hang before a windowe, a Coverlett to hang before a Dore, a Counterpoynt of tapestrie before an other dore, [...] a little folding table, a turkie Carpet to it, a Chare of russet sattin stript with silver & with silver and russet silk frence, [...] too foote Carpetes of turkie worke, [...] a long quition of cloth of golde on both sides, a long quition of nedlework of Cruel with pances and lyned with grene says, a little nedlework quition with my Ladies Armes in it lyned with red velvet, [...] three Deskes Covered with lether whereof one a great one, [...] a little Cofer covered with lether, a

¹⁶³ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 53.

¹⁶⁴ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 53.

little Cofer covered with black velvet, three flatt Cofers covered with lether, a boxe paynted and gilded with my Lordes and my Ladies Armes on it, a Yellowe Cotten to Cover it, an other boxe Covered with grene velvet, [...] My Ladie Arbells bedsted, a Canapie of darnix blewe and white with guilt knobs and blewe and white frence, a Cloth of Checker work of Cruell about the bed.¹⁶⁵

This very full and colourful room does not seem to suggest that Bess valued co-ordination above practicality in her private apartments.

The 'greene bed Chamber' is a better example of an *en suite* room. This contains:

a bedsted with head and posted Carved and guilt, a tester with bedes head and double vallans of grene cloth stitcht with yellowe silk and yellowe and grene silk frence about, Fyve Curtins of grene cloth sticht with yellowe silke, [bedding], a Covering for the bed of newe grene cloth with yellowe and grene silke frence, and a grene and yellowe lace about it, a quilt of grene sarcenet.¹⁶⁶

In addition to the bed hangings, it also has

Fowre Curtins for the windowes of grene and yellowe tufted sacking [...] a Chare of grene cloth stitcht with yellowe silke, a stoole of grene cloth stitcht with yelloe silke.

The distractions from this scheme are minimal, being only two Turkey carpets, one for a cupboard and one for a little folding table, and the four pieces of tapestry hangings with personages on the walls. This is the most co-ordinated room in the

¹⁶⁵ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 53-4. The omissions from the quotation are non-textile items which would not particularly influence the colour scheme of the room.

¹⁶⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 42.

New Hall but it is hardly a prominent one to be seen and admired by visitors and cannot be said to have been setting a style.

It is notable that the 'greene bed Chamber' is the only one to be named after the dominant colour of its furnishings. None of the rooms in the Old Hall is named in this way, although there are three at Chatsworth, the 'blewe gallerie', already mentioned above, the 'grene gallery' and the 'purple Chamber'. The 'grene gallery', which forms the northern counterpart of the 'blewe gallerie' on the first floor at Chatsworth, is decorated with seven green hangings but the 'purple Chamber' contains nothing to warrant its name, although it had done so in the 1560s.¹⁶⁷ Bess may have had a particular habit of naming rooms after colours, as the inventory of her first Cavendish home, Northaw in Hertfordshire, contained a 'blacke chamber' and a 'redd chamber' in the early 1540s.¹⁶⁸ Rooms named after colours are not common at this time and a search through a selection of aristocratic inventories of the sixteenth century has produced only two other examples, the 'Grene chamber' at Lacock in 1575, which has only one green item, a canopy, listed in it, and the 'Greene Chamber' at Gilling Castle in 1594, where the colour has a much more significant presence.¹⁶⁹ Bess appears, therefore, to be unusual in the naming of her rooms but it must be noted that most rooms, at Hardwick and elsewhere, were named after their function, status or occupant – things of greater importance than mere colour.

¹⁶⁷ Hardwick Drawers, H/143/6, fol. 2^v; cf. Appendix Three. The 'bed Chamber to Forrest great Chamber' at the Old Hall contained a quantity of purple bed hangings and other purple items in 1601 and may have become the new home of the items originally in the 'purple Chamber' at Chatsworth (*Of Household Stuff*, p. 35).

¹⁶⁸ Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Un-numbered document in box marked 'Bess and Earls Misc. II', hereafter Northaw inventory, pp. 13-14; cf. Appendix One. Note that page references to the Northaw inventory refer to the internal pagination of the document.

¹⁶⁹ Vernon, 'Inventory of Sir Henry Sharrington', p. 76. Edward Peacock, 'Inventories Made for Sir William and Sir Thomas Fairfax, Knights, of Walton, and of Gilling Castle, Yorkshire, in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Archaeologia*, 48 (1885), 121-56 (p. 128).

Hardwick's 'greene bed Chamber' shows some interest in continuing the colour of the bed, the dominant feature in the room, into the other furnishings. It pales, however, by comparison with the exactly contemporary scheme at Titchfield House, where the Earl of Southampton spread an *en suite* look through several rooms. There the scheme, which was based on crimson velvet, decorated with cloth of silver, cloth of gold and metal-thread lace, could be found in the adjacent rooms of 'the kings Chamber', 'the Queenes Chamber' and 'my old Ladies Chamber'. In each case it appeared on the bed hangings and chairs, stools and cushions.¹⁷⁰ These appear to be the foremost bed chambers at Titchfield but the 'greene bed Chamber' at Hardwick, whilst it is a good room, forming one of a series of chambers for guests or members of the upper household, is not one of the foremost rooms of the house or one by which Bess's outward show might be measured. Study of Bess's principal bedrooms might show whether there was any real concern for an *en suite* look.

The 'Pearle bed chamber' may reasonably be considered the second best bedroom.¹⁷¹ It was in a set of rooms on the second floor immediately behind the best bedroom and easily communicating with it, and also associated with a series of good rooms within easy reach of the north stairs, to be found on the first, second and third floors of the house. The bed consisted of

a bedsted Carved and guilt, a tester bedes head and double vallans
of black velvet imbrodered with silver golde and pearle with
sivines and woodbines fringed with golde silver and black silk with
my Ladies and Sir William Cavendishes Armes in the bedeshead,

¹⁷⁰ PRO, LR 1/10, fols 21^v-22. The Titchfield inventory, made on the occasion of the Earl of Southampton's attainder, is dated 4 April 1601 and is therefore almost an exact contemporary of Bess's inventories which accompanied her will of 27 April 1601.

¹⁷¹ In the Hardwick building accounts this room appears to be described as the second bed chamber (Hardwick MS 6, fol. 257).

Fyve Curtins of black and white damask layde about with golde lace and golde frence, and golde lace downe the middest [...] a Counterpoynt of black velvet stript with silver, imbrodered with pearle and purle, an other Covering for the bed of black sarcenet quilted.¹⁷²

With its emphasis on black, albeit in varying fabrics, the bed is reasonably colour co-ordinated, although only one further item in the room continues the colour theme:

a long quition of black velvet imbrodered with golde, silver, and pearle sutable to the bed, the tassells of golde, pearle, black silk and lyned with tuftaffetie.¹⁷³

The hangings of the bed were therefore co-ordinated with each other but no need was felt to blend them with the other furnishings in the room in order to make a good impression in this important chamber. It may be noted in passing that this bed was also listed in the Chatsworth inventories of the 1550s and 1560s and parts of it were therefore over forty years old by 1601.¹⁷⁴ Age did not, however, preclude its presence in such an important room nor its eventual bequest to Bess's daughter Mary, Countess of Shrewsbury.¹⁷⁵

The 'best bed Chamber' is so named because it occupies a particular architectural space in a sequence of rooms. However, it is also a reasonable assumption that the 'best bed Chamber' would contain the best bed. The inventory describes this bed as:

¹⁷² *Of Household Stuff*, p. 44. 'Sivines' are raspberries. Purl is a form of tightly coiled metal embroidery thread.

¹⁷³ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 44.

¹⁷⁴ Hardwick Drawers, H/143/2 and H/143/6; cf. Appendices Two and Three.

¹⁷⁵ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 192^v; cf. Appendix Four.

a bedsted guilt, a fayre lardge sparver and bedeshead with double vallans of cloth of golde, cloth of silver; sondrie Coulers of velvet imbrodered fayre with divers armes with portalls and pictures, and with a deep golde frence, sixe Curtins of blewe and red sattin stript with golde and silver and layde with golde lace about the edges and a gold twist downe the seames and fringed about with golde frence, a matriss, a downe bed, a downe bolster, too pillowes, a wooll quilt, a payre of fusteans, a white spanishe rugg, a Counterpoynt of Cloth of tyssue paned with cloth of gold and silver and a brode golde lace and golde frence about it, lyned with Crimson sarcenet, a purple sarcenet quilt.¹⁷⁶

It is immediately apparent that this bed did not have co-ordinated hangings in the manner of the 'greene bed Chamber' or the 'Shipp bed Chamber'. Rather, as in the 'Pearle bed chamber', splendour was established through the use of diverse expensive fabrics, passamenterie and elaborate embroidery: a show of magnificent gaudiness. This eclectic mix is emphasised by the rest of the room's furnishings, which seem to be of highest quality and very varied in appearance, including embroidered wall-hangings, needlework carpets and velvet-covered chairs.

The best bed has not survived in its entirety but some surviving textiles have been identified by Santina Levey.¹⁷⁷ These are the small heraldic panels embroidered on crimson velvet, the 'velvet imbrodered fayre with divers armes', and the small personifications within niches on black velvet, the 'portalls and pictures' (illustration 34). This is supported by Horace Walpole's disjointed description of the bed, which he saw in a decayed condition in 1760:

¹⁷⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 45-6.

¹⁷⁷ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 73.

Then her [Mary, Queen of Scots] State bedchamber. A very costly bed all in tatters, of Cloth of gold and silver paned, with pieces of different patchwork & embroidery, & one piece of grotesque embroidered like John d'Udine, in very good Taste, as is the Cloth on the table. This bed is said to be the Queen's, but Kennet in his lives of the Earls of Devonshire, says her bed was plundered away in the Rebellion, & to this bed are arms of several Earls & Countesses, & Bess of Hardwicke who mentions it in her will.¹⁷⁸

This description is echoed by S.H. Grimm's drawing of the bed in the 'Queen of Scots Room' in 1785 (illustration 35), which Santina Levey considers to show the remnants of the hangings described by Walpole set onto a different bed.¹⁷⁹ Even without the other parts of the hangings, these surviving pieces show the different colours and styles which could be brought together on the same important piece of furniture.

The best bed is also notable for being the only bed at Hardwick New Hall to have a sparver, a canopy hanging over the bed and suspended from above, rather than being an integral part of the bed structure itself.¹⁸⁰ This is generally considered to be old-fashioned by 1600. They certainly do not appear frequently in aristocratic inventories of the later part of the century and when they do they

¹⁷⁸ Paget Toynbee, 'Horace Walpole's Journals of Visits to Country Seats, &c', *Walpole Society*, 16 (1928), 9-80, (p. 30). Walpole wrote under the impression, strenuously encouraged in the eighteenth century, that the state rooms on the second floor were furnished as they had been when Mary, Queen of Scots was in captivity there. Her head having been removed three years before the New Hall was begun, this may be considered an impossibility. Walpole's overall impression of Hardwick may be summarised as 'Vast rooms, no taste' (p. 29).

¹⁷⁹ Between 1760 and 1785 the bed had presumably been dismantled and some of the textiles remounted. The 1792 Hardwick inventory shows that the best bedchamber had lost its identification with Mary, Queen of Scots, at least in name. Instead, Mary had become associated with the much smaller room in the north west turret, which bore the name 'Queen of Scots Room'. That room is still officially – that is, according to the guide book – called 'Mary, Queen of Scots' Room', although it is usually referred to simply as the 'Scots Room'. I am grateful to John Entwistle for allowing me to see his transcript of the 1792 inventory.

¹⁸⁰ There was one sparver at the Old Hall, in the 'Utter chamber to my Lady's olde bed chamber'.

often seem to be old or out of use. For example, at Sheffield Castle in 1582 there were nine old sparvers 'paste servyce'; at Leicester House in 1588 there was an 'old' sparver in 'the L. of Warwicks bedchamber'; Titchfield House had one 'olde' sparver in 'the knights chamber' and one other in store in the wardrobe in 1601.¹⁸¹ However, the Kenilworth inventory of 1583 shows that Robert Dudley had thirty-four beds there, of which the largest single group was the nine sparvers.¹⁸² Although that inventory does not list items by room but by type, these appear to have been splendid beds and certainly not redundant or consigned to store. It seems unlikely that Robert Dudley would have made use of derisibly old-fashioned beds.

It is not known whether Bess's best bed was created for the new house at Hardwick or whether it had an earlier existence. It seems likely that parts of the hangings predate the house. Santina Levey has shown that the crimson velvet heraldic panels probably date from the late 1570s. They make reference to the last three of Bess's four husbands and to the marriages of four of her six surviving children. Of the remaining two, Charles Cavendish married in 1581 and his brother, William, married in 1582. It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that the panels date from the period between the last marriage that is recorded, that of Elizabeth Cavendish to Charles Stuart, which took place in 1574, and 1581.¹⁸³ This argument relies, however, on the assumption that the surviving group of eight large and twenty-eight small heraldic panels is complete. Santina Levey has also shown by stylistic analysis that the personifications in niches, which formed

¹⁸¹ 'An Inventorie of all the Houshold Goods and Furniture belonging to George Earl of Shrewsbury at Sheffield-Castle and the Lodge. A'o 1582', *British Archaeological Journal*, 30 (1874), 251-63 (p. 254); Kingsford, 'Essex House', p. 35; PRO, LR 1/10, fols 22^v and 23^v.

¹⁸² *HMC de L'Isle and Dudley*, pp. 283-84. He also had eight field beds, six slope beds, five square beds, two canopy bedsteads and four simply listed as bedsteads.

¹⁸³ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 70.

the other surviving part of the original best bed hangings, probably dated from the 1570s.¹⁸⁴ Sadly, in the absence of an inventory of the furnishings at Chatsworth in the 1570s or 1580s, it is impossible to say whether these panels were used together on a bed there or had some different format until brought together for the Hardwick best bed. That the two sets were somehow meant to work together seems likely from their similar methods of decoration and identical sizes. A sparver as best bed in the 1570s or 1580s would be exactly in line with Dudley's style at Kenilworth and it may be noted that Dudley was a friend of the Shrewsburys and a visitor to Chatsworth whose reception there in 1577 caused much building and furnishing work.¹⁸⁵

Study of the beds at Hardwick in 1601 reinforces the idea that the hangings were more important than the bed structures themselves, although it is apparent that gilded beds were chosen for the best bedrooms. It is clear that there is continuity of use of the most expensive textile bed-hangings across several decades and this is explored in more detail in the annotations to the earlier inventories of Chatsworth in Appendices Two and Three. The 1601 inventory shows that there is some degree of colour co-ordination, both in the hangings of the individual beds and in connecting the beds with the other furnishings, but this does not seem to be the principal means of impressing. This seems a little old-fashioned and at odds with the practice developing in other aristocratic households and, ironically, a move away from the greater co-ordination shown at Chatsworth in the 1560s. Instead, an effect of magnificent display is created with rich fabrics, varied ornament and eclectic mixing of textures, colours and styles.

¹⁸⁴ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, pp. 65-8.

¹⁸⁵ The relationship between Dudley and Bess will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Furniture

Wall-hangings and carpets are objects whose purpose lies more in decoration and display than in function. The beds discussed above, whilst having an obvious function, are more notable for the qualities of their hangings and ornamentation, and whilst the presence of one obviously defines a room's basic function, it is only of limited assistance in showing how a room was actually used. Two remaining types of furnishings, seating and tables, may reveal more about the daily functioning of the New Hall.

Seating at the New Hall may be easily divided into three types: chairs, stools and forms, with chairs forming the apex of the hierarchy. If chairs are taken to be signifiers of status, there should be an obvious connection between the number of chairs possessed and the desire to demonstrate magnificence. The 1601 inventory shows a total of forty-two chairs at the New Hall, with thirty-two still at Chatsworth and twenty-one at Hardwick Old Hall. The following table allows comparison with other aristocratic inventories.

Location	Chairs	Location	Chairs
Lumley	95	Sheffield Castle	29
Leicester House 1588	45	Hardwick Old Hall	21
Hardwick New Hall	42	Lacock	21
Kenilworth 1583	38	Chatsworth 1559	18
Titchfield	36	Healaugh	18
Leicester House 1580	35	Kimberley	15
Chatsworth 1601	32	Wollaton 1601	15

The table shows that both the New Hall and Chatsworth compare well with Robert Dudley's Leicester House and Kenilworth, and the Earl of Southampton's Titchfield in terms of quantity.

The chairs at the New Hall may be considered further by type, as shown in this table:

Type	No.
Rich fabric, wrought	23
Wood	7
Leather	4
Plain fabric	4
Turkey work	2
For children, type unspecified but prob. wood	2
Total	42

The inherent status of chairs in houses where the majority are seated on stools or forms is emphasised by using chairs as frames for the display of rich textiles. At the New Hall 55% of the chairs are covered in rich or finely-wrought fabrics, and at the Old Hall, where eleven of the house's twenty-one chairs are covered in rich fabrics, the figure is 52%. This compares with 79% at Lumley Castle and 76% at Leicester House in 1580 but is closer to the 61% of Titchfield. Fabric-covered chairs were more expensive than wooden ones, however elaborately the latter might be carved or decorated. Bess's records do not allow for financial comparison of the textile-covered and wooden chairs at her three houses and it is difficult to find evidence for this from within the pool of inventories as not all include valuations and those that do often group objects together rather than valuing them individually. However, at both Healaugh and Lacock, where some comparison is possible, textile-covered chairs were valued on average at seven times the cost of wooden ones.¹⁸⁶ The owners who choose to display a higher percentage of textile-covered chairs are therefore making a financial as well as a visual statement.

The distribution of these chairs around Hardwick Hall is instructive. The 'high great Chamber' contains one elaborate, upholstered chair. It may be

¹⁸⁶ Joan Evans, 'An Inventory of Thomas Lord Wharton, 1568', *Archaeological Journal*, 102 (1945), 134-50 (passim); Vernon, 'Inventory of Sir Henry Sharrington', passim. At Healaugh the average value of a textile-covered chair was 10s. and a wooden one 17d.; at Lacock, 27s. against 3s. 11d.

assumed that only one person, therefore, whether unmarried queen or widowed countess, was expected to receive this mark of honour. The same is true in the next receiving room, the 'with drawing Chamber'. The 'best bed Chamber' is a little different because it has a set consisting of a great chair, a little chair and a little stool 'sutable'. Strangely, this grouping of two chairs and a stool had been the norm in the 1550s at Chatsworth, where nine of the fourteen beds listed are each accompanied by 'two chayres one litle stole and one longe Cusshyon of the same'.¹⁸⁷ By the Chatsworth inventory of the 1560s the pattern had already been a little diluted, with only half the appropriate bedrooms having two chairs rather than one, although this seems to include the more important bed chambers.¹⁸⁸ The arrangement in the 'best bed Chamber' of the New Hall in 1601 could suggest that in the formal intimacy of the innermost receiving room more than one person could be honoured with a chair, but there is still a definite hierarchy where one chair has higher status than the other.

The chairs in the 'Gallerie', however, confuse this apparent concentration on a single person. In that room there are three chairs, 'a Chare of nedleworke with a golde and silver bonelace and silver and Crimson silk fringe, a Chare of nedleworke with golde and grene silk fringe, [and] an other Chare of nedelworke with yellowe and blewe silk fringe'.¹⁸⁹ There seems to be no particular difference between the chairs themselves but there was probably an attempt to give added status to one by means of accessories. The description of the last chair is immediately followed by 'a footestoole of watchet velvet, a foote Carpet of turkie

¹⁸⁷ Hardwick Drawers, H/143/2; cf. Appendix Two.

¹⁸⁸ Hardwick Drawers, H/143/6; cf. Appendix Three. The one good bed chamber at Chatsworth in the 1560s which seems not to adhere to the pattern of giving two chairs to the best rooms is 'The noble mans bedd chamber' (fol. 1).

¹⁸⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 48.

worke'.¹⁹⁰ Whilst it is not clear to which of the chairs the footstool belonged – there is, for example, no clear colour co-ordination – it is notable that there is only one footstool to three chairs. Similarly, there is no information about the size of the foot carpet, but it may have been small enough to be placed under or in front of just one chair. The more definite evidence that one chair was considered more important than the others appears slightly further on in the description of the contents of the 'Gallerie', in the list of 'nytene long quitions whereof one for *the Chare* the rest for the windowes' (the italics are mine).¹⁹¹ This cushion, which has not survived, is described as

One long quition for the Chare the grounde purple velvett
imbrodered with golde and silver with a portall and beastes, birdes
and flowers with silver and black silk frence, oring tawnie silk and
silver tassells lyned with purple velvett.¹⁹²

As with the footstool, there is no way of identifying which of the three chairs had this cushion with it as there is no attempt at colour co-ordination or obvious similarity of motif. That important chairs were associated with special cushions is shown repeatedly in other aristocratic inventories, as in the

¹⁹⁰ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 48.

¹⁹¹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 48. The many cushions listed in the 1601 inventory have intentionally not been discussed in this chapter. They are well covered in Santina Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, Chapters Two and Three. However, one point of note is the description of eighteen of the cushions as being for the windows. The number certainly equals the number of windows in the Long Gallery. Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 58, has stated that 'In each window was a window seat furnished with a richly embroidered cushion'. The windows certainly do not currently have structural window seats and, when the panelling has recently been removed for conservation of the window masonry above, there has been no sign of building alterations which might have removed the window seats. The inventory does not list enough forms or stools to be separate seats in front of the windows. The only possibility that remains is that the cushions were placed on the panelled window ledges and were therefore either solely for decorative interest or to make comfortable the act of leaning on the window ledge. This practice may be seen in the background of a portrait of Mary Tudor and Philip II, now at Woburn Abbey (PDE 1380), where a cushion fills the window ledge. The exposure of valuable textiles to sunlight and moisture seems strangely wanton for the prudent and housewifely Bess, whose will exhorted her descendants to protect her furnishings from 'all manner of wett mothe and other hourte or spoyle therof' (PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 189v; cf. Appendix Four).

¹⁹² *Of Houshold Stuff*, 48.

ij Chaires of Crimson veluett imbroadered

wth Cloth of siluer

xxvj^s viij^d

two longe Cusshens of Crimson Veluet sutable

to the Chaires

xxvj^s viij^d

at Titchfield.¹⁹³ This practice may also be seen in portraits of the period. It is less common for the cushions, as at Hardwick, to be so different from the chairs with which they are associated.

The greatest concentration of chairs is in the 'lowe great Chamber', where there are five chairs in total:

a Chare of Cloth of golde and silver with a frett of grene velvet and with grene silk frence, a Chare of murry and yelloe velvet with golde and red silk frence, a Chare of yellowe sattin of bridges imbroadered over with russet velvet with yellowe and black silk frence, too little Chares of Crimson velvet with golde frence.¹⁹⁴

The distinction in size of the two groups of chairs creates an obvious hierarchy amongst the sitters but there is still a greater number of people seated on chairs than in any of the state rooms on the floor above. This emphasises the role of this room as the most important of the chambers in daily use but also suggests that it could be more egalitarian, where the rules of hierarchical formality could be relaxed and more people could be honoured because strict precedence was less important. As above, in the 'Gallerie', it is likely that one chair was given some extra status by its accessories. Immediately after the chairs in the inventory come 'a footestoole of wood, [and] a foote Carpet of turkie worke', although this foot

¹⁹³ PRO, LR 1/10, fol. 21, items in the 'best greate Chamber'. It is interesting that the two chairs were valued the same as the two cushions.

¹⁹⁴ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 52.

stool is obviously somewhat utilitarian.¹⁹⁵ It is not difficult to imagine that these were the chairs used by Bess and her family when they presided over the assembled household. There is a strong sense of the way in which this room and the higher status reception rooms on the upper floor reflect each other. Above, Bess receives those of higher status to her domain. Below, Bess is herself received into the domain of her household officers and their domestic and estate business. In the 'high great Chamber' it is the authority of English monarchy which presides from the pictures on the walls, in the 'lowe great Chamber' it is essentially the authority of Bess's family and connections. The hierarchic structure remains the same but the participants vary in degree.

Upholstered or textile-covered chairs were obviously the most important at Hardwick New Hall and in the houses of other aristocrats. At Chatsworth in 1601, however, the situation was a little different. Ten of the thirty-two chairs were covered in rich fabric but slightly more, twelve chairs, were inlaid. Robert Dudley, the usual point of comparison, had only two chairs described as having their 'frames curioslye layed in wth blacke and white bone' at Leicester House in 1580 and just one chair with 'the frame wroughte with bone' at Kenilworth.¹⁹⁶ Titchfield contained three chairs inlaid with bone, two of which were specifically described as wooden.¹⁹⁷ Six chairs 'of Spanyshe making' were to be found at West Firle, five of which were 'garnyshe wth collored boone' and one 'garnyshe with collored woode'.¹⁹⁸ Lumley Castle, always lavish, housed seventeen 'Chares of walnuttre and Markatre', but that was just a small part of the overall collection of ninety-five chairs. The inlaid chairs at Chatsworth, none of which has survived,

¹⁹⁵ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 52.

¹⁹⁶ The Dudley Papers, fol. 9; *HMC de L'Isle and Dudley*, 1, 288.

¹⁹⁷ PRO, LR 1/10, fols 22-22^v and 23^v.

¹⁹⁸ R. Garraway Rice, 'The Household Goods, Etc., of Sir John Gage, of West Firle, Co. Sussex, K.G., 1556', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 45 (1902), 114-127 (p. 123).

are, therefore, a notable phenomenon, which will be picked up again below in the discussion of stools and forms.

Bess's leather chairs, of which she had four at the New Hall and one at each of her other Derbyshire houses, form a relatively insignificant group but this is true throughout the inventories. Very few aristocratic houses make any use of leather chairs at all but Wollaton stands out with five leather chairs out of its total of fifteen and Leicester House in 1588 with thirteen out of forty-five, although eleven of these are described as very old. At Hardwick these chairs are placed discreetly in areas of relative unimportance. There is one, 'a black lether Chare gilded', in the 'stayre Chamber' at the top of the house, where the house's only leather wall-hangings, 'sixe peeces of guilt lether hanginges', are also to be found.¹⁹⁹ This conjunction of gilded leather pieces suggests some desire for conformity in a house where it is not generally prized. The other leather chairs, which are also gilded, are in Bess's 'with drawing Chamber', the 'Closet within the Maydes Chamber' near Bess's bedroom, and 'Over the skreyne in the halle'.²⁰⁰ None of these locations suggests that the chairs were deemed to contribute to the sense of opulence and yet, as will be seen below, they were probably all new.

Chairs, of whichever type, provided seating only for the minority. The 1601 inventory reveals 135 stools in use at the New Hall and thirty-seven forms, and lists them with the following attributes:

¹⁹⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 42.

²⁰⁰ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 52-4.

Type	Stools	Forms
Covered in rich fabric	56	12
Joined	51	4
Inlaid	13	5
Turkey work	6	0
Covered in cloth	4	0
Wood	3	0
Leather	2	0
Unspecified	0	16
Total	135	37

It is clear that even these more utilitarian types of seating could play their part in magnificent display by being draped in rich fabric.

The inlaid stools and forms are unusual and, together with the inlaid chairs mentioned above, form a substantial part of the seating. In addition to those at the New Hall, listed above, Bess left thirty-five inlaid stools at Chatsworth and five at the Old Hall, and one further inlaid form at Chatsworth. It is appropriate to draw a comparison between this emphasis on inlaid work and the elaborate inlaid panelling discussed above in the section on wall-hangings. It is clear that the moveable furniture would have complemented the static panelling in several of the rooms at Chatsworth and created an atmosphere of luxury quite different from the textile-dominated appearance of Hardwick. The intentional creation of a decorative scheme there based on inlaid wood is emphasised by the concentration of quantities of inlaid furniture in rooms with very elaborate panelling. Eleven inlaid stools and an inlaid table are to be found in the 'high great Chamber' at Chatsworth, which was 'verie fayre wainscotted with Coulored woodes markentrie and set fourth with planetes'.²⁰¹ Close by, the 'high gallerie' has fourteen inlaid stools, an inlaid form and an inlaid table, as well as 'verie fayre

²⁰¹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 24.

[wainscot] with coulored woodes markantrie & pelasters fayre set forth'.²⁰² In neither room is there a textile presence. Little is known of the origins of these pieces of furniture but it is possible that, with the exception of six stools specifically described as 'french stooles', some may have been constructed by the same craftsmen who produced the panelling, rather than purchased separately and brought into the house.²⁰³

The distribution of forms and stools through the more important rooms at Hardwick suggests how large a company might be accommodated. The 'high great Chamber' has fourteen stools and six forms, which suggests that a minimum of twenty-six people might be seated.²⁰⁴ The 'with drawing Chamber', with its greater sense of intimacy, seats just eleven people on individual stools in addition to the chair.²⁰⁵ Once again, however, it is the 'Gallerie' which seems a little unexpected, having, in addition to the three chairs, just three stools and two forms, which appears to make it an unwelcoming and inconvenient place.²⁰⁶ This is in line with Hardwick Old Hall, where the 'long gallerie' has just four stools, but contrasts with Chatsworth, where the 'high gallerie' has fourteen stools and the lesser 'matted gallerie' has a form and eight stools.²⁰⁷ In the lower status rooms the presence of fourteen stools in the 'little dyning Chamber' reveals that space to have been a surprisingly congested room given its small dimensions, and the 'lowe great Chamber', with its ten stools and four forms, in addition to the five

²⁰² *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 24

²⁰³ There is only one surviving documentary reference to an inlayer at Chatsworth. In the week commencing 9 December 1577, £5 was 'payd to taylor the inlayer aforhand toward the payment of viij^{li} for two years wadge to begin at candelmas' (Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick MS 4, fol. 34).

²⁰⁴ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 47-8.

²⁰⁵ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 47.

²⁰⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 48-50.

²⁰⁷ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 38 and 24.

rich chairs discussed above, has its role as the busy heart of the house confirmed.²⁰⁸

The indeterminate area outside the 'lowe great Chamber' may also have some light shed on it by consideration of the forms and stools there. The 'half pace at the stare head', which is now more usefully known as the Chapel Landing, contained in 1601 'a long drawing table, a Cubberd, Fyve formes, [and] a great glass Lanthorne'.²⁰⁹ This is quite a large amount of furniture for a relatively small space which has also to function as an important thoroughfare linking all the areas of the first floor at the northern end of the house with the stairs. It is possible that the space served a similar, although less grand, purpose to the 'lowe great Chamber', combining a business area with a household mess room, or served as a waiting room for visitors to the house who sought to do business in the adjacent chamber. It is also inviting, however, to suggest that the presence of so many forms means that the space should be considered as an integral part of the arrangements for worship in the chapel, to which it is also adjacent. The chapel itself was on two levels and would have accommodated the lower household downstairs, where only four forms are listed in what must have been a fairly large space, suggesting that most people would have stood, whilst Bess and a select few worshipped from the upper chapel, accommodated on one chair, three inlaid forms and a stool, with plenty of cushions. The extra seating behind the upper chapel on the 'half pace at the stare head' could reasonably have been moved into position for services in order to provide seating for the upper household, suitably elevated from the lower household below but firmly behind their mistress and her closest intimates. Religious worship must have provided one of the few

²⁰⁸ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 52.

²⁰⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 51.

opportunities to block this busy thoroughfare without obstructing household life. The easy moveability of the forms means that they could serve different purposes at different times and could readily be moved into the centre of the space to face the chapel or to the walls or to surround the table.

The 'long drawing table' on the 'half pace at the stare head' was one of thirty-one tables which the 1601 inventory reveals to have been present at Hardwick New Hall. These may be shown to have been of the following types.

Type		No.
Square		9
Inlaid		9
of which	Square	5
	Long, carved	1
	Little	1
	'inlayde'	1
	'inlayde borde'	1
Folding		4
Long		4
Long, drawing		2
Little		1
Marble		1
'a drawing table Carved and guilt standing uppon sea doges inlayde with marble stones and wood'		1

There are three inlaid tables of this period remaining at Hardwick, the 'Eglantine' table (HHE/F/360) (illustration 36), a square table with playing cards depicted in the corners (HHE/F/326), and a table bearing the initials 'ES' (HHE/F/366). The brevity of the inventory descriptions makes it impossible firmly to identify any of these survivors but it is possible that the table with the initials 'ES', which is now supported by a relatively modern base, could be the

‘inlayde borde’ listed in ‘my Ladies with drawing Chamber’ in 1601.²¹⁰ The ‘Eglantine’ table is traditionally associated with ‘an inlayde table in the windowe’ of the ‘high great Chamber’ but there is no certain proof of this hypothesis and, as the guide book notes, it ‘could also be the “long table carved and inlayde” listed in the Low Great Chamber in 1601’.²¹¹ It is notable, and in considerable contrast to the textiles, that there was, apparently, no need to be more specific in the descriptions of these tables, the greatest of which, such as the ‘Eglantine’ table, must have represented considerable expenditure. The chance survival of the ‘Brome table’ in the Burrell Collection, which has many similarities with the ‘Eglantine’ table, suggests that there must originally have been many inlaid tables bought or commissioned but other aristocratic inventories do not make many clear references to them.²¹² In 1583 Kenilworth Castle contained ‘Three square Tables of maple, inlaide and boordered with wallnutt tree, with frames to them’, and five years later Leicester House contained ‘a square table layd in wth marbell stone, standing vppon a frame, broke and defaced’.²¹³ Characteristically, Lord Lumley had twenty-five ‘Tables of walnuttre and Markatre’ but the 1609 inventory of Lumley Castle itemises just one, a ‘little merketree table wth the frame xl^s’.²¹⁴ At forty shillings, that table had the same value as ‘x square oake & elme tables & liverie Cupbords’, which illustrates the greater cost of the more elaborate work. This apparent dearth of other inventory examples may be another illustration of

²¹⁰ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 53. Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 55, suggests that it was ‘probably set up on trestles when she [Bess] wanted to eat in private’.

²¹¹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 47; Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 58. This is the only item in the inventory to have its location within a room recorded.

²¹² Glasgow Museums Reg. No. 14.306. I am grateful to Patricia Collins, Curator, Cultural and Leisure Services (Museums) for her correspondence concerning this table.

²¹³ *HMC de L’Isle and Dudley*, I, 293; Kingsford, ‘Essex House’, p. 35.

²¹⁴ Cust, ‘The Lumley Inventories’, p. 29; Mary F.S. Hervey, ‘A Lumley Inventory of 1609’, *Walpole Society*, 6 (1917-18), 36-50 (p. 42).

Bess's unusual partiality for elaborate woodwork at the earlier Chatsworth, where four inlaid tables remained to 1601.

The other table of note is the 'drawing table Carved and guilt standing uppon sea doges inlayde with marble stones and wood' which was in the 'with drawing Chamber' in 1601 (illustration 37).²¹⁵ The survival of this table (HHE/F/330) allows further comment. Stylistically, it is undoubtedly French, derives from designs by Jacques Androuet du Cerceau (illustration 38), probably dates from the 1560s or 1570s and, in addition to the decorative techniques noted by the inventory clerk, includes some areas painted to resemble marble.²¹⁶ The detail of the inventory description suggests that the piece had particular value, either financial or sentimental, to Bess, as simple identification could have been achieved by mention of the 'sea doges' alone. There is, however, no evidence to reveal how the table and the cabinet (HHE/F/329) with which it appears to be *en suite* came to Hardwick (illustration 39). Simon Jervis has made the tentative observation that it is possible that the table was a gift to Bess from Queen Elizabeth:

In the representation of George Gascoigne (1525-77) presenting his *Hemetes the heremyte* to Queen Elizabeth at Woodstock in 1575, which occurs in the copy illuminated by Gascoigne, the poet shows the Queen seated in a throne supported by a sphinx, very similar to Du Cerceau's central sphinx and thus to those supporting the Hardwick table. If this throne is realistically represented – and it is doubtful whether anyone of Gascoigne's artistic limitations would have been capable of inventing such an extraordinary piece of

²¹⁵ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 47.

²¹⁶ The identification of the du Cerceau designs was originally made by Simon Jervis, as noted in Jervis, *Printed Furniture Designs*, p. 26.

furniture, this is a second usage of the Du Cerceau design in England within twenty-six years at the outside. It is even possible that the Woodstock throne and Hardwick table were en suite and that the latter was a royal present to the Countess of Shrewsbury.²¹⁷

This belief in the realism of Gascoigne's image (illustration 40) seems unfounded, as the interior is undoubtedly a work of the imagination, perhaps derived from European engraved sources. Mark Girouard has also drawn attention to the 'regal quality' of the table and suggests that, if it did not originally belong to Queen Elizabeth, it may have belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots, and have been given to Bess as a gift.²¹⁸ David Bostwick, meanwhile, has demonstrated that Mary considered gifts of French furniture to many influential people, including Shrewsbury, who was himself interested in French furnishings and may have acquired the table directly.²¹⁹ There is simply no evidence directly related to this table to prove or disprove any of these theories.²²⁰

Timothy Mowl has written that 'the superb French Mannerist "sea-dog" table had, as far as is known, no equals in the great houses of the period'.²²¹ Certainly, none has survived in England, although many examples survive in their native France. Inventory descriptions, however, suggest that the Earl of Leicester had three tables which might have had a similar impact. At Leicester House in 1580 the inventory included 'a rounde table of wallnutt tree borne up wth antiques carved & gilte' and 'a fayer square table of marble & wallnutt tree standing uppon

²¹⁷ Jervis, *Printed Furniture Designs*, pp. 25-6. The Gascoigne drawing appears in B.M. Royal MS 18.A.XLVIII, fol. 1.

²¹⁸ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 70.

²¹⁹ Bostwick, 'The French Walnut Furniture at Hardwick Hall', *passim*.

²²⁰ Ralph Edwards, ' "A Drawing Table" at Hardwick Hall', *Burlington Magazine*, 70 (1937), pp. 189-90, presented the opinion that this was an English table. Although his evidence remains interesting, more modern argument has overtaken it.

²²¹ Timothy Mowl, *Elizabethan & Jacobean Style* (London: Phaidon, 1993), p. 171.

iiij tearmes'.²²² Eight years later those tables were no longer identifiable in the inventory but there was 'a sweete wood table standing vppon fower beares'.²²³ From the wording of their inventory descriptions, these tables seem to have several of the characteristics of the Hardwick table. The earlier two tables may well have been French, although the table supported by bears, one of Dudley's family motifs, must have been a special commission and appears to have been simpler in construction and decoration, which may suggest that it was made in England.²²⁴ No other tables of this highly ornate, sculptural style appear in the other aristocratic inventories.

The 'sea doges' table is clear evidence of the acquisition of French furniture for Chatsworth during the 1570s and 1580s, when that house was at its most magnificent, and its subsequent re-use twenty years later at Hardwick. As described above, in the section dealing with wall-hangings, surviving records show that most of the tapestries for the New Hall and the refurbished Old Hall in 1601 were purchased, either new or second-hand, as the building took shape. By contrast, there seem to be no records relating to the purchase of carpets or beds during the 1590s. Furniture falls between the two. There are only a couple of references to the purchase of complete pieces of furniture. The accounts show that Bess

Boughte of M^r Gryffith the upholster 20 Octobre xxxiiij Eliz:[1591]
sixe lether Chayres the price 002-10-00.²²⁵

A few months later, in January 1591/2, forty shillings were paid to an unknown supplier for

²²² The Dudley Papers, fol. 12^v.

²²³ Kingsford, 'Essex House', p. 34.

²²⁴ Bears appear regularly on the furnishings of Dudley's houses.

²²⁵ Folger Shakespeare Library MS V.b.308, fol. 12.

a great chayre a Lyttle chayre and a stolle.²²⁶

Both purchases were made in London. The latter entry is not very detailed so it is impossible to make a strong connection with items listed in the inventory.

However, it is tempting, but certainly not irrefutable, to note that the only grouping of great chair, little chair and stool may be found in the 'best bed Chamber' of the New Hall, where the inventory offers

A greate Chare trymmed with Crimson velvett imbrodered with
golde and with a golde frence, an other little Chare and a little
stoole sutable with a golde frence.²²⁷

It would be convenient if the earlier purchase from Mr. Gryffith represented all the leather chairs in the inventory but, despite the identical quantity, this is not definite. The chairs at the New Hall are described as

a black lether Chare guilded [...]

a Chare of black lether and some guilt [...]

a Chare of black lether guilded [....]

and

a Chare covered with lether and guilt.²²⁸

These four may, of course, be considered as coming from one set. The single example at Chatsworth is simply 'a lether Chare', which provides no information either to place it with the four above or to separate it.²²⁹ The element of doubt lies with the example at the Old Hall, which is described as 'a Chare of lether printed', a decorative technique not mentioned in connection with any of the others.²³⁰

²²⁶ Hardwick MS 7, fol. 15^v.

²²⁷ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 45.

²²⁸ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 42, 52, 53 and 54.

²²⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p.24.

²³⁰ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p.38.

These appear to be the only references to the purchase of complete pieces of furniture. There is more evidence, however, for items of furniture being made within the household at Hardwick rather than purchased outside and brought there. The references include:

payde to roger astone for making of a longe borde	
w th a frame for the hye greate chamber for a leaven days	
worke at vj ^d the day	v ^s vj ^d
to hys man for the same worke at vj ^d the day	v ^s
for claspes and houkes for the same borde	
fore desin	ij ^s vj ^d
	[July 1599] ²³¹
payde to bramley for xij days aboute making ij square tabuls vj ^d the	
day syxe shelling	vj ^s
payde to bramleys man for the same worke for xij days	
at iiij ^d the day	iiij ^s
	[July 1599] ²³²
to henry Bramley the Joynar for xvj dayes being all due to him till	
this daye making tables & formes	viiij ^s
to too joyn ^r s of oldcotes for iij dayes worke in making a peece of	
the frame for the table in the lowe great chamb ^r	iiij ^s
for CC sixe penny nayle whereof abraham had the half for a	
Cubberd in the gallery at the olde building	xij ^d

²³¹ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 57^v. See note 46 for discussion of the dating used in this document. The dates given above are in the corrected form.

²³² Hardwick MS 8, fol. 58.

for too thowsand little tacks for stooles

ij^s

[1-19 August 1599]²³³

To henry Bramley from the xxvijth of August till the vijth day of
September xij dayes about bordes & formes

for y^e halle

vj^s

[September 1599]²³⁴

To henry Bramley in making formes for the hale

xij dayes

vj^s

[September 1599]²³⁵

To henry Bramley for xvij dayes wage in working a Table for the
hill great chamb^r

viiij^s vj^d

To his man for xvij dayes at iiij^d a day

v^s viij^d

[November 1599]²³⁶

To henry Bramley for xij dayes in making a square table for store
vj^s to his man for xij dayes

iiij^s

[November 1599]²³⁷

payd to bramley for aleaven days worke aboute the frame for the

stone tabull at vj^d the day fyve shellings vj^d

v^s vj^d

²³³ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 59^v.

²³⁴ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 61.

²³⁵ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 62.

²³⁶ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 73^v.

²³⁷ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 74^v

payde to bramleys man for aleaven days worke aboute the same
tabull fore pence the day thre shellings eyght pence iij^s viij^d

[December 1599]²³⁸

payde to bramley for syxe days aboute the frame for the Lettell
marbull tabull at syxpence the day thre shellings iij^s

[December 1599]²³⁹

payde to bramley for tow lettell cheares for James ij^s
payd to bramley for a hye Joyned stoulle xij^d
To ye Joyner for a bath cheare for James xij^d & a litle []
for him xij^d ij^s

[January 1600]²⁴⁰

To Bramley for a fortnights worke whereof he was three dayes di
in taking downe the windowes by the gallery dore and the rest
about the square table done wth marble & blackstone vj^s

[April 1600]²⁴¹

To Bramley for two square tables 000-10-00

[February 1608].²⁴²

²³⁸ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 77.

²³⁹ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 77^v. The little marble table is probably the one listed in the 'Shipp bed Chamber' in 1601, which may be the surviving table HHE/F/491.

²⁴⁰ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 81^v. James Cavendish, Bess's grandson, second son of William Cavendish by his first wife, Anne Keithley.

²⁴¹ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 89.

²⁴² Hardwick MS 29, p. 5. Although later than Bramley's other work, this furniture just falls within Bess's lifetime, being paid for in the month of her death.

There are also references to the purchase of items such as glue and screws and to the sawing of wood, including elm and walnut, for items of furniture.²⁴³

Many of these items may be identified in the 1601 inventory. The chief craftsman involved, Henry Bramley, had been involved in the construction of the houses at Hardwick, often working alongside William Bramley, 'Old Bramley', who was probably his father.²⁴⁴ At the same time as his work on furniture, Bramley was also panelling the 'high great Chamber', 'second bed Chamber' and 'best bed Chamber'.²⁴⁵ He was obviously adaptable but it may be noted that much of this plain furniture was covered with textiles when in use. The penultimate reference above, that to work done on a table with marble and blackstone in April 1600, suggests, however, that he could also do the more skilled work of letting stone into wood. It is uncertain exactly which table in the 1601 inventory this represents. There are several inlaid tables around the house but one in the 'lowe great Chamber' perhaps comes closest, being 'a square table set with marble stones & inlayde with black and white wood'.²⁴⁶

As so few items may be identified as newly acquired for the New Hall, it is obvious that much of the furniture must have come from the earlier house at Chatsworth or possibly one of the other Cavendish or Talbot houses, such as the London house in Chelsea. The fragmentary Chatsworth inventory of the 1560s and the 1559 inventory do not allow any definite identifications of furniture in the 1601 inventory. Indeed, the only non-upholstered furniture the 1559 inventory lists is 'four e paier of cobberds', although the amount of linen listed for long

²⁴³ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 59v: 'to olde myllington for sawing Elme & walnutt tree sixe dayes ij^s'.

²⁴⁴ Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall. Part 2*, pp. lxvi and 267. The spellings 'Bramley' and 'Bromley' appear to be interchangeable.

²⁴⁵ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 59. Mention of the 'second bed Chamber' is interesting because the name is not used in the 1601 inventory. Presumably it refers to the 'Pearle bed chamber', now known as the Blue Bedroom.

²⁴⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 52.

boards, square boards and cupboards suggests that the house did in reality contain greater quantities of brown furniture.²⁴⁷ Comparison with the 1601 inventory is startling and it must be concluded that plain, non-textile furniture was considered more or less worthless when it came to ensuring the inheritance of the contents of the earlier Chatsworth and that Bess had yet to acquire any pieces of high value or status.

Study of Bess's furniture clearly shows how she used it to create the stage setting against which the hierarchic dramas of Elizabethan society could be played. It is also apparent that Bess created hierarchies based on her own tastes and her access to different types of furnishing. It is notable, for example, that of the chairs in the state rooms, only the great and little chairs in the 'best bed Chamber' are not of needlework. As with the carpets discussed above, Bess seems to have valued needlework extremely highly and this is different from the tastes found in the other inventories, where rich fabrics such as velvet, satin and cloth of gold, often with embroidery rather than needlework, predominate.

It is also clear that Bess put a high value on her French furniture. Amongst the wealth of inlaid stools mentioned above are six 'french stooles' which obviously form a set as all are described as 'sett with marble stones' and four are 'inlayde'.²⁴⁸ It is a reasonable suggestion that the last two stools were also inlaid but the inventory clerk or the copyist has missed the word. The stools appear in the 'high great Chamber', 'with drawing Chamber' and 'best bed Chamber'. Whilst it might be argued that Bess has diminished the impact of this set by dividing it amongst three rooms, it is also possible that she chose to display it to a greater audience by sharing it amongst more of the state rooms. The fact that the

²⁴⁷ Hardwick Drawers, H/143/2; cf. Appendix Two.

²⁴⁸ *Of Household Stuff*, pp. 45 and 47.

inventory clerk chose to specify that these stools were French suggests that this exotic origin was noteworthy, perhaps for sentimental reasons but perhaps also for more calculated reasons of value or kudos. In the relatively small sanctum of the 'with drawing Chamber' two of these stools, alongside the 'sea doges' and, probably, the 'Cubberd with tills Carved and guilt' with which the table is associated, might have been intended to demonstrate the strength of Bess's fondness for French furnishings, a taste she shared with Robert Dudley.

The French furnishings and the inlaid pieces emphasise that for much of the most ostentatious furniture Bess was reliant on pieces remaining from the Chatsworth of twenty years earlier. For general, everyday furnishings, however, the accounts reveal a great deal of on-site manufacturing activity, as if Bess were acknowledging that the demonstration of status required quantity as well as quality. Her taste is, perhaps unsurprisingly, a little old-fashioned, preferring, for example, a garish profusion of colour and textile to the modern sophistication of colour co-ordination and rich but more simply-wrought fabrics.

Pictures

Bess was not a connoisseur of painting in the modern sense and yet pictures form a major element in the furnishing of Hardwick Hall in 1601. Her collection was numerically substantial and the subjects depicted and their deployment around the house could be used to communicate simple messages, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Analysis of how the collection was acquired shows that it was accumulated across almost sixty years, nearly all Bess's adult life, certainly all her life in pursuit of material status. It is apparent that a picture collection had become a necessary symbol of taste and position for her and that

the collection itself would be judged by others on grounds of quantity and subject matter rather than 'quality' in any appreciable post-Elizabethan sense which values most highly the name and skill of the artist. To emphasise this lack of aesthetic pretension, this study has been extended beyond the paintings in the 1601 inventory to include other decorative items usually displayed, like paintings, on walls, and with the exception of tapestries and other textile hangings, with the remaining criterion that the objects should be decorated with a recognisable subject. In this way maps, painted glasses and, in one case, an ivory have been included as types of picture but, for brevity, the word 'pictures' has been used throughout. A full list of these pictures at Hardwick appears as Appendix Six.

In mere quantity of pictures listed in the 1601 inventories, Bess would seem to have been a major collector. Her new house at Hardwick contained one hundred and four individually listed pictures, ninety-seven of which may be described as paintings, and the Old Hall something over thirty-six. Chatsworth, significantly emptied of its most valuable objects, had none left. These totals are, of course, small in comparison with the roughly contemporary collections of Lord Lumley and the Earl of Leicester, who had, respectively, more than three hundred and more than two hundred items, but they compare very well with other aristocratic collections as revealed in inventories.²⁴⁹ All but one of the other inventories surveyed for this study fail to produce more than a handful of pictures between them. The Earl of Lennox at Temple Newsam had nine pictures, all of which were portraits; Sir Francis Willoughby at Wollaton had twenty-nine pictures, twenty-one of which were maps, five pedigrees but, remarkably, no portraits; the Earl of Southampton had twenty-five pictures at Titchfield, of which

²⁴⁹ Goldring, 'An Important Early Picture Collection', p. 158, n. 8. Leicester's paintings are spread through his inventories, for which see Appendix Five. Lumley's are listed in Cust, 'The Lumley Inventories', pp. 21-8.

two were maps but the others were unspecified, suggesting their low value in the estimation of the official inventory-takers.²⁵⁰ A greater quantity was owned by William Herbert, 1st Earl of Pembroke, whose inventory of 1561/2 shows nearly sixty paintings and whose collection has been shown to have increased before his death in 1570.²⁵¹ At Lambeth Palace, however, Archbishop Parker had upwards of ninety-five pictures in his collection in 1575, which is very similar in quantity to Bess.²⁵²

At the New Hall all Bess's pictures are clearly identified by name of sitter or subject, although none has any indication of artist.²⁵³ This careful distinction between one picture and another bestows a certain sense that the paintings were valued and important but it is also possible that it was merely a practical way of itemising generally small and portable artefacts. At the Old Hall, in contrast, the pictures, all of which are in the 'long gallerie', are dismissed merely as 'twentie several pictures, too pictures of mother of pearle, too pictures of plaster', with the exception of 'twelve pictures of the twelve months'.²⁵⁴ A further sense of the comparative value of the pictures and the other furnishings is given by their place in the hierarchical order in which the inventory describes each room. In general, pictures come towards the end of each listing, followed only by hearth furniture and panelling, well behind the more highly valued tapestries, hangings, beds, furniture and cushions. Only in one room, the 'with drawing Chamber', is the balance altered, as the pictures are listed directly after the wall-hangings and

²⁵⁰ Crossley, 'A Templenewsam Inventory', pp. 91-103; Pamela Marshall, *Wollaton Hall: An Archaeological Study* (Nottingham: Nottingham Civic Society, 1996), pp. 94-9; PRO, LR 1/10.

²⁵¹ Goldring, 'An Important Early Picture Collection', p. 160.

²⁵² William Sandys, 'Copy of the Inventory of Archbishop Parker's Goods at the Time of his Death', *Archaeologia*, 30 (1844), 1-30 (pp. 8, 10-12, 15). The inexact total is caused by 'hangings of green saie, with papers & mappes' (p. 15).

²⁵³ The surviving pictures themselves often bear inaccurate names. Laing, 'Rechristenings at Hardwick', *Country Life*, 183 (9 March 1989), 134-5.

²⁵⁴ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 38.

before the furniture, carpets and cushions.²⁵⁵ It seems contradictory that the pictures can be so little valued as to be listed in such an inferior place and yet so carefully identified as to be instantly recognisable. In other aspects of the inventory detailed description implies importance, as a precaution against confusions over legal ownership.

The identification of sitters or subjects in the pictures at the New Hall allows the collection to be categorised and it is easy to see that it falls into traditional categories. Of the one hundred and four pictures there, sixty-seven are portraits, nineteen are heraldic, nine religious, four are parts of the world, three are maps and two are classical narrative. Within the large group of portraits, eighteen are of close family members, the remainder being English royalty (21), connections of Mary, Queen of Scots (10), international figures (6) and contemporary – in a broad sense suitable to Bess's long lifetime – figures (12). The heraldic items are not always so well defined, being 'a looking glass paynted about with the Armes of England', 'A glass with his [George Talbot's] and my Ladies Armes in it', 'a glass with my Ladies Armes', 'three tables with Armes in them', 'a frame with armes paynted in it' and, most emphatically, 'twelve tables with Armes set in them'.²⁵⁶ The more detailed descriptions of the painted glasses suggest that they were more highly valued, the value lying more in the technique than in the subject matter.²⁵⁷ The religious pictures consist of scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary, the prodigal son, the story of Joseph and a representation of hell. The cartographical pieces are two maps of unspecified locations and 'Fowre

²⁵⁵ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 47.

²⁵⁶ *Of Houshold Stuff*, in order, pp. 48, 52, 53 and 45.

²⁵⁷ One of these painted glasses survives (HHE/F/805) and demonstrates the richness of the *verre églomisé* work. The Hardwick guidebook (p. 53) supposes that this is the 'glass with my Ladies Armes' but it seems more likely that it is in fact the 'glass with his and my Ladies Armes in it'.

pictures of the fowre partes of the worlde'.²⁵⁸ The two classical pictures are the painting of 'Ulisses and Penelope' and probably the picture of 'Twoo twynns', the identification of which will be discussed below.²⁵⁹ Jane Clark has written of Robert Dudley's picture collection that it contained 'several religious works, many genre subjects and many maps, as well as the portraits reflecting family connections and career which almost always predominated on English walls'.²⁶⁰ Bess's collection echoes these categories but it is apparent that she had little interest in maps and genre paintings, the first perhaps too masculine and the second too cosmopolitan. Whilst maps were a mainstay of many other people's collections, genre paintings were perhaps more indicative of the taste of the more sophisticated collectors whose vision extended to European artists and collectors.²⁶¹

Elizabeth Goldring has observed that 'rarely do English inventories of this period provide information on dates and places of acquisition'.²⁶² By implication, it is difficult to discover much about how collections of the Elizabethan period were compiled. However, study of Bess's earlier inventories and the account books of the 1590s and 1600s shows that her 1601 picture collection appears to have come together in four key phases. The earliest inventory is of Northaw, Hertfordshire, and dates from the period 1540-1547, when it was the property of Sir William Cavendish.²⁶³ In 1547 Bess married Cavendish and the contents of Northaw would have become her daily surroundings too. This inventory shows

²⁵⁸ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 48.

²⁵⁹ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 47 and 50.

²⁶⁰ Jane E.L. Clark, 'The Buildings and Art Collections of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (with notes on his portraits)' (unpublished M.A. report, University of London, 1981) p. 26.

²⁶¹ The account books of William Cavendish, Bess's son, record the purchase by him of several maps but it is unclear whether they are for display or practical use.

²⁶² Elizabeth Goldring, 'The Earl of Leicester and Portraits of the Duc d'Alençon', *Burlington Magazine*, 146 (2004), 108-11 (p. 108).

²⁶³ Appendix One provides information on the dating of the Northaw inventory.

that Cavendish owned a remarkable number of pictures for that period, including portraits, religious pictures and classical subjects, as well as many other items showing an appreciation of 'Antick' styles. Calculating a precise total, however, is not straightforward. As Susan Foister has noted in a more general context, it is difficult to be sure whether some of the items described as painted cloths should be thought of as wall-hangings or pictures in the modern sense.²⁶⁴ Allowing for some generosity of interpretation, therefore, the Northaw inventory shows that Cavendish owned thirty-one pictures there, as well as any which might have been in his other houses. This would make him a considerable owner. Of these pictures, eleven may still be identifiable in the 1601 Hardwick inventory.

The majority of the Northaw pictures are religious in subject and these seem to account for most of the eight religious pictures at Hardwick. In 1601 the 'lowe Chapple' at Hardwick included 'too pictures of our Ladie the Virgin Marie and the three Kinges'.²⁶⁵ The earlier Northaw inventory offers: 'Itm iij tables one of y^e iij kyngs colen' in 'the redd chamber', 'the iij kyngs of Colleyn' in 'my masters chamber', and 'Itm a grete table for a alter of the iij kyngs of collyn' in 'the chamber over the kyttchyn', later moved to the chapel.²⁶⁶ The picture of the Annunciation may also be matched successfully. The 1601 inventory of the 'lowe Chapple' offers 'the salutation of the Virgin Marie by the Angle' and the Northaw inventory offers a picture 'of Gabryell & ow' lady' in 'the redd chamber'.²⁶⁷ There is also agreement between 'the picture of hell' in the 'Gallerie' in 1601 and 'iij tables one of hell' in 'the blacke chamber' at Northaw.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ Foister, 'Paintings and Other Works of Art', p. 274.

²⁶⁵ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 51.

²⁶⁶ Northaw inventory, pp. 14, 15 and 18; cf. Appendix One.

²⁶⁷ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 51-2; Northaw inventory, p. 14; cf. Appendix One.

²⁶⁸ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 50; Northaw inventory, p. 14; cf. Appendix One.

These associations are clear because of the relatively detailed descriptions at both periods but others are less certain. The Northaw picture 'a story of the byble' could be 'the prodigall sonne' in the 'with drawing Chamber' in 1601 or 'The storie of Joseph' in the 'Gallerie' or, obviously, neither of them.²⁶⁹ This leaves two 1601 pictures of the Virgin Mary, 'Our Ladie the Virgin Marie' from the 'Gallerie' and 'The Virgin Marie' from the 'lowe great Chamber', to be sought amongst the Northaw pictures.²⁷⁰ These could be identified with 'a nother of ow^r lady & her sonn', which was in the 'the redd chamber' at Northaw in the 1540s, 'a table of the byrthe of chryste' in 'the chapele' there, or 'ow^r lady kyssyng her sonn' from 'the blacke chamber' at Northaw.²⁷¹ One final religious item, a carving in ivory, may also appear in both inventories: 'a table of Iverie carved and guilt with little pictures in it of the natyvitie' appears in the 'Gallerie' in 1601 and may be identifiable with 'Itm a table of yvery wth sondry stories of the gossell', which was in 'the chapele' at Northaw.²⁷²

The Northaw inventory also contains some secular pictures which seem to have survived until 1601. It lists, amongst many items which show an interest in 'Antick' styles, 'ij other tables one wth towe Antycke boys'.²⁷³ Although there is no definite evidence, it seems possible that these might be the 'Twoo twynns', perhaps Romulus and Remus or Castor and Pollux, which the inventory clerk could not otherwise identify in the 'Gallerie' at Hardwick.²⁷⁴ Rather more certainly, the 'pictor of my masters father' in 'my masters chamber' at Northaw is readily identifiable with 'Mr. Thomas Cavendishe, father to Sir William

²⁶⁹ Northaw inventory, p. 7; cf. Appendix One; *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 47 and 50.

²⁷⁰ *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 49 and 52.

²⁷¹ Northaw inventory, pp. 5 and 14; cf. Appendix One.

²⁷² *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 50; Northaw inventory, p. 5; cf. Appendix One.

²⁷³ Northaw inventory, p. 7; cf. Appendix One.

²⁷⁴ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 50.

Cavendishe' in the 'lowe great Chamber' at Hardwick.²⁷⁵ The portrait of 'quene Ann' in the 'chapel chamber' is presumably the 'Quene Anne' in the 'Gallerie' at Hardwick and the 'pyctor of the frenche kyng' in the 'new parler' is probably the 'King of Fraunce', also in the 'Gallerie' in 1601.²⁷⁶ The earlier inventory also lists several pictures of English kings, including 'the pictor of ow^r sou[er]eigne lord the kyng', which must be Henry VIII, and 'one of kyng harry y^e vijth', both of whom are represented in the 1601 inventory.²⁷⁷

These are not the only representations of English monarchs in the Northaw inventory. Susan Foister, commenting on problems of terminology in the discussion of art works in England at this time, observes that when 'portraits on painted cloth are mentioned it seems virtually certain that pictures [as opposed to hangings] are meant'.²⁷⁸ If that principle may be accurately applied here, it makes the following entry in the Northaw inventory particularly interesting: 'Itm a payntyd clothe w^t y^e pictor of kyng harry y^e viijth ow^r sou[er]ygne lord & kyng harry y^e vijth & y^e vjth edward the forthe & Rycherd the third'.²⁷⁹ All these kings appear at Hardwick in the 'Gallerie'.²⁸⁰ If these earlier royal pictures did not themselves survive, they might have formed the models for copies painted at a later date before 1601, perhaps as Bess's desire for magnificence increased.

It is clear that as early as the 1540s William Cavendish was a significant owner of pictures and that much of his collection came to Bess and was considered worthy of display and bequest by her more than fifty years later. His embryonic set of pictures of English monarchs is an unusually early example of a

²⁷⁵ Northaw inventory, p. 15; cf. Appendix One; *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 52.

²⁷⁶ Northaw inventory, pp. 7 and 11; cf. Appendix One; *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 49.

²⁷⁷ Northaw inventory, pp. 11 and 7; cf. Appendix One.

²⁷⁸ Foister, 'Paintings and Other Works of Art', p. 274.

²⁷⁹ Northaw inventory, p. 6; cf. Appendix One, 'the lytle parler'.

²⁸⁰ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 49.

taste that was to become common as the century passed and which Bess continued and enlarged.²⁸¹ Most of the religious works which appear in 1601 can be proved to be remainders from the earlier part of the century, interestingly and perhaps bravely still on public display rather than discreetly placed in private areas. There is, of course, no way of knowing whether these early pictures were treasured for sentiment, for aesthetic value, for legal reasons based on Cavendish's will or because they provided a cheap way of acquiring a large and desirable picture collection.

Northaw represents the earliest period in which traces of the Hardwick collection can be found. The second key phase is represented by the Chatsworth inventory of the 1560s (Appendix Three). Although this is not a complete inventory, it does give a full listing of all of the first floor, which was, before the addition of the state rooms on the second floor in the following decade, the principal floor of the house. It is perhaps surprising, therefore, to find only four paintings listed after the quantity found at Northaw. This may, in part, be explained by the absence of a description of the chapel's contents, which would have been amongst the incomplete ground floor and might have included the religious pictures. It is also possible that some of the pictures were in another house, perhaps the one in London.

The four paintings, which are all together in 'my lad^s chambre', Bess's own room, are 'iiij tables the on off m^r cavendissh the other off my m^r an other off my lady & an other off my lady Jane'.²⁸² There are two possible interpretations of the first two items on the list. The portrait of 'm^r cavendissh' may be the portrait

²⁸¹ Robin Gibson, 'The National Portrait Gallery's Set of Kings and Queens at Montacute House', in *The National Trust Year Book 1975-76*, ed. by Gervase Jackson-Stops (London: The National Trust, [1975]), pp. 81-87, (p. 81).

²⁸² Hardwick Drawers, H/143/6, fol. 3^v; cf. Appendix Three.

of Thomas Cavendish discussed above and known from Northaw. That of 'my m^r' could then be the 'Sir William Cavendishe' in the 'lowe great Chamber' in 1601.²⁸³ However, as William Cavendish had certainly been dead some years by the time of this inventory, 'my m^r' may be 'Sir William Seyntlowe', Bess's third husband, whose portrait hung in the 'with drawing Chamber' in 1601, leaving 'm^r cavendisshe' to be either Thomas or William.²⁸⁴ The portrait of William Cavendish which still survives at Hardwick (HHE/P/7), attributed to John Bettes, states in the inscription that the sitter is aged forty-four, which would date it to about 1549, eight years before his death (illustration 41).²⁸⁵ This picture, or any other painted in Cavendish's lifetime, would be suitable for this Chatsworth inventory. The picture of Bess herself could be any of her three portraits which were present at Hardwick in 1601 but it should probably be identified with the one surviving portrait of Bess which shows her in her comparative youth (HHE/P/73) (illustration 42). This picture, which has subsequently been inscribed 'Maria Regina', is attributed to a follower of Hans Eworth and has been variously dated to c. 1550-55, c. 1557 and c. 1560.²⁸⁶ Whatever the exact date may be, it is appropriate for an inventory of this period, unlike the other two surviving portraits at Hardwick, which are later.

The fourth portrait, that of 'lady Jane', is not present in the 1601 inventory under any identifiable name. It could be hidden amongst the 'twentie several pictures' at Hardwick Old Hall in that year but it seems unlikely that the identity

²⁸³ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 52.

²⁸⁴ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 47. For questions concerning the dating of the earlier inventory see Appendix Three.

²⁸⁵ The portrait of William Cavendish (HHE/P/7) is on loan from the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement. Cavendish died in 1557.

²⁸⁶ In order: Roy Strong, *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, 2 vols (London: HMSO, 1969), I, 288; Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 9; Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 260.

of the sitter would have been forgotten.²⁸⁷ As there is no obvious Lady Jane in Bess's family, the most likely 'Jane' is Lady Jane Grey. Bess had links with the Grey family of long standing and Jane Grey, her sister Katherine and both her parents were godparents to various of Bess's children.²⁸⁸ As late as 1602, Arbella Stuart was able to say that she would recognise the picture or handwriting of Lady Jane Grey, which suggests knowledge of some surviving items in Bess's household where Arbella had been brought up.²⁸⁹ It is a possibility that by 1601 the portrait of Lady Jane Grey, if it were indeed she, had passed into Arbella's ownership. In her will of 1673 Frances, Duchess of Somerset, the second wife of Arbella's husband, William Seymour, bequeathed 'my picture of the Lady Arabella (my Lord's first wife) and the picture of Queen Jane Grey'.²⁹⁰ Duchess Frances was the conduit through which many of Arbella's papers reached the collection at Longleat and the picture of Arbella is still there, although it must be noted that there is not one of Lady Jane Grey there now.²⁹¹ Roy Strong has stated that the 'earliest recorded reference to a portrait of Lady Jane occurs in the Lumley Inventory of 1590: *Of the Lady Jane Graye, executed*'.²⁹² Clearly she is

²⁸⁷ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 38.

²⁸⁸ It is generally assumed that Bess had been in the household of the Marquis and Marchioness of Dorset, Lady Jane's parents, as a lady-in-waiting in the mid 1540s. This is, as Durant notes, mere speculation as there is no evidence to prove such a connection. This would explain, however, the relationship between the families and why Bess and Sir William Cavendish were married at Bradgate Manor, the country seat of the Grey family (Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 12). Lady Jane Grey was godmother to Temperance Cavendish, Katherine Grey to Elizabeth Cavendish, their mother, Frances Grey, was godmother to Frances Cavendish and Henry Grey, despite his political overthrow, was godfather to Charles Cavendish (Collins, *Historical Collections*, pp. 11-12).

²⁸⁹ *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart*, p. 121.

²⁹⁰ *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Bath Preserved at Longleat*, Historical Manuscripts Commission Series 58, 5 vols, (London: HMSO, 1904-1980), IV (1968), p. 235.

²⁹¹ The archivist at Longleat, Dr. Kate Harris, confirms that there is no portrait of Lady Jane Grey there now.

²⁹² Strong, *Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, p. 78.

not present in the 1601 inventory but the existence of the inventory of Chatsworth in the 1560s suggests an earlier reference.²⁹³

The next period in which the Hardwick collection of 1601 was formed is the one for which there is no surviving documentary evidence, the period in which Chatsworth was enlarged and most magnificently furnished in the 1570s and 1580s. This period accounts for a large proportion of the collection, perhaps forty pictures in all, including presumably all the pictures associated with Mary, Queen of Scots, the Lennox family and leading nobles such as Leicester and Burleigh.²⁹⁴ This period arguably represents the height of Bess's social consequence and the portraits acquired then demonstrate not only family connections but also a significant moment in the public careers of Bess and Shrewsbury. The fact that, through the marriage of Elizabeth Cavendish and Charles Stuart, the public and private became joined, was a bonus.

With one exception, the pictures known from the Chatsworth period are all portraits. The remaining one, 'Ulisses and Penelope' is the only certain classical painting listed in 1601, although it may be noted that more had existed at Northaw in the 1540s, including the one of 'Antycke boys' which might be the 'Twoo twynns' of 1601, as discussed above. The 'Ulisses and Penelope' painting (illustration 43) is unsigned but is dated 1570 on the entablature in the upper left part of the composition and has been attributed by Anthony Wells-Cole, perhaps

²⁹³ David Durant has noted that a portrait of Lady Jane Grey was observed at Hardwick by Byng in 1789 and yet the 1792 inventory does not list one (Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 262). However, as no inventory of Hardwick has ever listed her, it seems quite possible that Byng merely mis-identified some other female sitter, plenty of whom were not identified in the 1792 inventory, and that this connection with the Chatsworth inventory of the 1560s is quite coincidental.

²⁹⁴ The full-length portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots, (HHE/P/11), which is a version of the 'Sheffield portrait', is a later work by Rowland Locket. It may, however, be a copy of an original listed amongst these in 1601.

on slender grounds, to John Balechouse.²⁹⁵ This picture (HHE/P/129) has survived and hangs in the Withdrawing Chamber at Hardwick, where it was also listed in 1601. Some doubt has been cast on the identification of the surviving picture with the subject listed in 1601. Alastair Laing has concluded that it represents Tarquinius Collatinus Returning to Lucretia, having noted that 'the supposed Ulysses is shown not as a beggar but as a gentleman with a train of companions (the suitors would have been inside the parlour), and that the lady of the house and her maid are weaving by night (when Penelope unravelled her work)'.²⁹⁶

The question of weaving is simply dealt with since the female figure weaves by daylight in the top right corner of the painting and unravels by night with the help of a candle in the top left. It is certainly the case that the arrivals at the house are dressed as gentlemen but the explanation for this is found in Anthony Wells-Cole's identification of two European woodcuts as the source for the composition, with the group of soldiers being copied from a depiction of the Triumph of Mordecai.²⁹⁷ It may be supposed that the inventory clerk was well placed to identify the subject matter correctly and that had there been a picture of Lucretia, it would have been duly and accurately identified.²⁹⁸ The greatest significance of this picture lies in its being the only certain classical painting in the collection at a time when Lumley and Leicester were actively collecting such subjects.

²⁹⁵ *Dynasties*, p. 101. John Balechouse or Painter, employed in Bess's household, will be discussed in Chapter Five.

²⁹⁶ *Dynasties*, p. 101.

²⁹⁷ *Dynasties*, p. 101, entry by Anthony Wells-Cole. His discussion of this picture is taken much further in Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 292-3. His suggestion that the picture 'had a very specific message, to warn the wealthy, powerful and still-young Earl against his dangerous prisoner by reminding him of his faithful and patient wife at Chatsworth' (p. 290) is beguiling but unlikely. There is no evidence that Bess and Talbot were in any disagreement over Mary as early as 1570, however much their captive was to divide them later.

²⁹⁸ By coincidence, the discovery of the Northaw inventory shows that there was a picture of 'lukeres' there in the 1540s, but there is no mention of it in 1601 and there can be no question of identifying this later painting with it. Northaw Inventory, p. 11; cf. Appendix One.

Fortunately, there is a good deal of documentary evidence for the final period of assembling the collection listed in 1601. It is clear that during the late 1590s, as the building of Hardwick was completed and the business of furnishing it began, Bess set about acquiring pictures to augment her display. In the Summer of 1598 pictures were brought from Chatsworth on two occasions at a cost for carriage of 4s. 4d.²⁹⁹ Meanwhile, Bess's son, William, was acting as her agent in London on a number of business, legal and domestic matters, including the purchase and transport of pictures. The following year, 1599, he paid for many items including

xvj paynted pictures in tables	xxj ^s ³⁰⁰
for the pictures of Edward the vj ^t Edwarde the iij ^o and queene marie	001-05-00
for the pictures of Cardinall poole, Cardinall Wolsey and Bushoppe Gardener	001-00-00 ³⁰¹
for fyve pictures bought by my m ^r	001-13-04. ³⁰²

In addition to these clear references there are oblique references to other pictures, such as a payment of eighteen pence for a box in which to carry pictures, five shillings to a joiner for making a case for a picture of Lady Shrewsbury (Bess's daughter, the wife of Gilbert Talbot, 7th Earl of Shrewsbury, of whom there was a portrait in the 'with drawing Chamber' in 1601), and for the carriage of pictures to

²⁹⁹ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 30. The entries in this account book have subsequently been dated from 1592 onwards. However, there is irrefutable internal evidence that this should be 1598. For example, fol. 28^v refers to wages for the 40th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, which would be 17 November 1598 – 16 November 1599.

³⁰⁰ Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick MS 10a, fol. 39, April 1599.

³⁰¹ Hardwick MS 10a, fol. 48^v, October 1599.

³⁰² Hardwick MS 10a. The pagination ends at fol. 72 and after that identification is possible only from the date. This entry is for the period December 1599 – April 1600.

William's lodgings and then to Islington to be collected by the carriers to Mansfield and Sutton.³⁰³

The purchase of portraits of three more English monarchs is interesting because it shows Bess consciously continuing and enlarging a set of which she already had the basis. Whilst Edward VI and Queen Mary might be thought of as contemporary figures, the presence of Edward III is a sign that Bess was following the fashionable example and acquiring subjects from more distant royal history. The portraits of Cardinal Wolsey, Cardinal Pole and Bishop Gardiner are initially more surprising, although it may be noted that pictures of all three appear in Lord Lumley's collection in 1590 under the general heading 'Pictures of a Smaller Scantlinge' and Pole and Wolsey are present in Archbishop Parker's gallery at Lambeth Palace fifteen years earlier.³⁰⁴ Gardiner, at least, may have had some real association for Bess since he was godfather to her third son, Charles, and Wolsey had been the *lynch pin of the career of her brother-in-law, George Cavendish*, but it is more likely that their presence in the collection reflects availability rather than careful choice.³⁰⁵

The five unidentified pictures purchased by William a few months later for £1 13s. 4d. may also represent monarchs known to have been present in the inventory of 1601. These five pictures, if equally priced, cost 6s. 8d. each, which matches the individual cost of portraits of English monarchs bought by Edward Alleyn for Dulwich in 1618.³⁰⁶ This figure is also the individual amount paid for the pictures of Wolsey, Gardiner and Pole and it is tempting to surmise that the

³⁰³ Hardwick MS 10a, fols 39, 46, 46^v, 44 and 44^v. The portrait of Mary, Countess of Shrewsbury, is presumably the one still hanging in the Long Gallery at Hardwick (HHE/P/4).

³⁰⁴ Cust, 'The Lumley Inventories', p. 23. Lumley's fourth cleric in this group, Bishop Fisher of Rochester, was not at Hardwick. William Sandys, 'Copy of the Inventory of Archbishop Parker's Goods at the Time of his Death', p. 11.

³⁰⁵ Collins, *Historical Collections*, p. 12.

³⁰⁶ Gibson, 'Kings and Queens at Montacute House', pp. 82-3.

picture of Edward III may have cost the same and therefore been a little cheaper than the more modern monarchs with which it was purchased. William's accounts do not name his picture sellers, although they do his book sellers, but it is likely that the pictures were bought 'off the peg' rather than directly from the artists. In the same accounts for October 1599 there is a payment to 'a paynter for drawing a seale for the hospital' (Bess's almshouses at Derby) and it may be significant that there the payment is for a service whereas in the purchases of paintings it is for a product, as if the artist were not directly involved in the transaction.³⁰⁷

Also to this period must fall the full-length portrait of Queen Elizabeth (HHE/P/35) which still hangs in the Gallery at Hardwick and which was presumably one of the four pictures of the current monarch in the 1601 inventory.³⁰⁸ It has been suggested by Roy Strong amongst others that this portrait may be identified with the one which is mentioned in the accounts for July 1599 under the payment of twenty shillings 'To a Carrier that brought the Quenes picture from London'.³⁰⁹ Some doubt may be cast on the certainty of this identification by a reference which appears in the accounts of April 1599:

'For her ma^{ties} picture w^{ch} my m^r sent for in som hast xiiij^s iiij^d
a cover for the same xij^d 000-14-04'.³¹⁰

This picture is presumably amongst at least seven which William Cavendish sent north to his mother that summer.³¹¹ It is not unreasonable to identify this picture with the one for which the carrier was paid in July. If that is indeed the case, it is extremely unlikely that the surviving full-length portrait could have been

³⁰⁷ Hardwick MS 10a, fol. 48^v.

³⁰⁸ This picture is illustrated and discussed at length in Chapter Four.

³⁰⁹ Roy Strong, *Artists of the Tudor Court* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1983), p. 129. Hardwick MS 8, fol. 56^v.

³¹⁰ Hardwick MS 10a, fol. 39. The entry appears to contain a numerical error as the cost of the cover has not been included in the total paid.

³¹¹ Hardwick MS 10a, fols 44 and 44^v.

purchased for as little as fourteen shillings and four pence. Information about the costs of portraits at this time is scarce but it may be noted that in May 1597 Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, 'paid Mr Seeger alias Somersett the hearold for her Maties picture – 9l. 10s', and in the following two years Robert Peake was paid £5 each for paintings of the Earl and Countess of Rutland.³¹² Since the 'size and work involved, in the sense of the complex lace or drapery work, conditioned price', it is difficult to imagine the existing portrait of Queen Elizabeth being purchased for the lowly sum of fourteen shillings and four pence.³¹³

The surviving portrait of Queen Elizabeth has been attributed to the workshop of Nicholas Hilliard, with a substantial input from his pupil, Rowland Lockey, who later went on to do a great deal of work for Bess's son, William.³¹⁴ Roy Strong has suggested that the head and shoulders are based on a large woodcut from Hilliard's workshop, to which they are identical, but that the rest of the painting has been invented.³¹⁵ The attribution of the painting is based on stylistic analysis and there is no documentary evidence. However, in 1592 Bess certainly had contact with Hilliard and Lockey, as an entry in the accounts for July of that year shows. The appearance of this transaction in the account books is confusing, for the clerk made mistakes in his ledger. The entries read:

Item geven the xxviiith of July to one M^r Hilliard for the drawinge
of ~~two~~ one picture xls

Item geven unto the same M^r hilliard twentye shillinges

³¹² Erna Auerbach, *Nicholas Hilliard* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 273. Roy Strong, *The English Icon* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 49, where other examples are also given.

³¹³ Strong, *The English Icon*, p. 49.

³¹⁴ Auerbach, *Nicholas Hilliard*, pp. 255-6.

³¹⁵ Roy Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 83 and 126.

Item more unto one Rowland for the drawinge of one other two
picture fortye shillings.³¹⁶

It is likely that this refers to the commission of miniatures, rather than domestic furnishings, as sixty shillings appears to have been Hilliard's standard rate.³¹⁷ It is also possible that the commission was connected with secret marriage negotiations on behalf of Arbella Stuart and Rainutio Farnese, son of the Duke of Parma. William Cecil's agents had informed him that Farnese sought a picture of Arbella and that this was being painted by 'Hildyard'.³¹⁸ The whereabouts of such a miniature are now unknown. No documentary evidence links Bess with any other named artist although, as previously noted, her collection included a picture of her second husband by Bettes, and a portrait of herself from the school of Hans Eworth, both painters of the court circle in the middle of the century. Apart from these few examples, the creators of Bess's pictures are both anonymous and insignificant.

The collection which was formed in these four key periods was displayed in several places round the building in 1601. Roy Strong has written that 'most of the Hardwick pictures found their setting in one of the most important factors governing the growth of secular art, namely the long gallery, that most distinctive feature of the Elizabethan and Jacobean manor house.'³¹⁹ In fact, whilst the Long Gallery at Hardwick undoubtedly contained the greatest concentration of pictures, forty-one out of one hundred and four, half as many again, sixty-two, were displayed elsewhere. This distribution may be broken down in the following way,

³¹⁶ Hardwick MS 7, fol. 30. Auerbach, *Nicholas Hilliard*, pp. 254-56.

³¹⁷ Auerbach, *Nicholas Hilliard*, p. 24.

³¹⁸ *Calendar of State Papers (Domestic), Elizabeth, 1591-1594*, p. 99, item 164; p. 209, item 118; *HMC Salisbury*, IV, p. 144.

³¹⁹ Strong, *The English Icon*, p. 44.

where the figure in brackets represents the number of paintings, as opposed to pictures, in each room:

Room	Pictures
Gallerie	41 (40)
lowe great Chamber	25
high great Chamber	14 (13)
with drawing Chamber	10
[Bess's] with drawing Chamber	6 (4)
lowe Chapple	3
wardrop	3 (1)
Jacobs Chamber	1
Prodigall Chamber	1

If it is assumed that the 'high great Chamber' and 'with drawing Chamber' were kept for formal or important occasions and rarely used, and that the 'Gallerie' was therefore not often used, then it is clear that the bulk of the collection was not expected to be seen regularly. Although it might be debated whether a picture has more impact for being seen often or occasionally, the pictures which would have been seen by most people on most occasions were those in the public and most used areas of the house, the 'lowe great Chamber', which probably served as the upper servants' hall, the customary dining room and even as a business area, and the 'lowe Chapple'. It is notable that the other generally public area of the house, the 'hale', was not furnished with pictures. Whilst there is apparently some sense in which the collection may be divided into pictures for general sight and those for special viewing, there is no sense of pictures for private use. Only one picture is in the privacy of a bed chamber, that of 'Lady Elizabeth Talbott' in the 'Prodigall Chamber'.³²⁰ The relative privacy of Bess's 'with drawing Chamber' contains only one portrait in addition to the glass with her arms, the three tables with arms in them and one map. It may be noted that this portrait is of Bess herself.

³²⁰ It is most probable that the Elizabeth Talbot depicted was the daughter of Gilbert and Mary Talbot, born 1582, who married Henry Grey, Earl of Kent, in 1601. See also the discussion of this chamber in Chapter Four.

It is difficult to make comparisons between this arrangement of pictures and the disposition in other houses with large collections. The Hardwick inventory is unusual amongst the inventories of substantial picture collections because it lists the pictures by room. Of the Leicester inventories only the probate inventory of 1588 is compiled in that way. At Leicester House there is a concentration of paintings and maps in the Great Gallery, with only one or two in a selection of other rooms. However, the greatest number of pictures and maps is in the Wardrobe, which shows that this inventory represents a house in retirement rather than set out for active use.³²¹ At Lambeth Palace almost all of the Archbishop's pictures are displayed, as expected, in the Gallery.³²² The Lumley inventory of 1590 does not list the castle's contents room-by-room but the probate inventory of 1609 does to some extent, as the pictures, plain furniture and minor furnishings are listed by room but the hangings and textile furnishings are not. This later Lumley inventory shows a wider distribution of pictures through the house, although the greatest concentrations are in the gallery and in the 'Saule', which is presumably a solar or withdrawing chamber.³²³ Although this should offer some comparison, less is known about the utilisation of space at Lumley Castle than at Hardwick Hall and so it is difficult to compare the functions of rooms and therefore the role to be played by the pictures in them. Overall, although it is a difficult comparison to make, the wide dispersal of pictures beyond the long gallery at Hardwick appears unusual by comparison with other picture collections.

It is also difficult to discern from inventories by what methods pictures were hung in rooms. In the Hardwick accounts there are no references to the hanging of pictures, in contrast to the frequent mention of girth web, tenter hooks

³²¹ Kingsford, 'Essex House', pp. 28-46.

³²² Sandys, 'Inventory of Archbishop Parker's Goods', pp. 10-12.

³²³ Hervey, 'A Lumley Inventory of 1609', pp. 40-3.

and curtain rings for the hanging of tapestries.³²⁴ One key question is whether the pictures were hung over the tapestries and wall-hangings or were reserved for the bare areas of wall between them. There is no reason why Bess should have had a consistent style for this and every likelihood that the circumstances of each room would have dictated the hang. Studied on a room-by-room basis, the chief difficulty is not knowing the sizes of all the pictures, which would have allowed a calculation of whether there was enough bare wall space to accommodate all the pictures or whether they would have been forced to hang over the wall coverings. However, the certain survival of five pictures from the 'with drawing Chamber' allows for some crude calculation for that room. The inventory informs us that the chamber had panelling around it to a height of four feet. Above this were the five hangings of Zenobia, Artemesia, Cleopatra, Lucretia and Penelope, and it is clear from the survival of four of these that they would have taken up almost all of the available wall space, leaving a gap in the window area. The room also contained ten pictures. One of these, the portrait of the Earl of Leicester, survives (HHE/P/ 62) and is known to be small (approximately 37 cm x 28.5 cm), which would allow for it to be hung in the small spaces left near the windows. The other surviving pictures, however, are much larger and could not be so confined. The picture of 'Ulisses and Penelope' (HHE/P/129) is 85 cm x 103 cm; the portrait of Mary, Countess of Shrewsbury (HHE/P/4), is approximately 112 cm x 86.5 cm and has probably been cut down; the two double portraits of Scottish monarchs are even larger, that of Mary and Darnley (HHE/P/126) being 108 cm x 142 cm and that of James V and Mary of Guise (HHE/P/60) approximately 109 cm x

³²⁴ Hardwick MS 29, fol. 161, refers to a payment of 2d. to a joiner for hanging pictures in a gallery but this is in September 1610, outside the period of this study, and probably refers to work at William Cavendish's London house, to which there are many references in this manuscript.

143.5 cm.³²⁵ It is difficult to see how these, with the addition of the other five pictures, could all have hung on bare wall and so it must be assumed that at least some of them hung over the wall-hangings.

Other rooms are less straightforward. The 'lowe great Chamber' seems to echo the situation in the 'with drawing Chamber' as the walls are potentially entirely covered by tapestries and there would seem to be insufficient room for twenty-five separate pieces in the spaces which are left. In the 'high great Chamber' the tapestries of the story of *Ulysses* would have left a large area of wall uncovered on the west side of the room and in the bay before the addition of the extra panelling in the early seventeenth century. Only two of the fourteen pictures there in 1601 can now be identified and they are both small. In the absence of information about the others it is impossible to judge whether the available space would have accommodated them. The 'Gallerie' is most tantalising. The thirteen tapestries of the story of Gideon would have covered all the walls, as they do today. Indeed, there is only space for them now because the two north-facing windows of the bays have been blocked and tapestries hung over them.³²⁶ It is possible that parts of the tapestries may originally have been folded or even cut into smaller pieces and used to cover some of the areas of wall between the windows, which would have reduced the places available to hang pictures without covering the tapestries.³²⁷ Whilst many of the paintings, including the earlier English monarchs, are known to be small, the gallery pictures do include at least two full-length paintings, one of Arbella Stuart (HHE/P/1) and, presumably, the portrait of Queen Elizabeth discussed above (HHE/P/35). It is

³²⁵ The sizes are taken from the National Trust catalogue and have been altered into metric measurements to the nearest half centimetre.

³²⁶ This was done by the 6th Duke of Devonshire in the nineteenth century.

³²⁷ It is possible that conservation of the *Gideon* tapestries may reveal old damage such as this.

difficult to imagine that this latter portrait would have been tucked away in one of the bays or between the windows on the east wall of the gallery. It seems likely, therefore, that some of the pictures in the gallery would have hung over the tapestries but it is also obvious that the greater part of the tapestries would have been visible and not covered by pictures, simply because there were so many fewer pictures hanging in the gallery in 1601 than at any subsequent period. The exact ordering of the hang in all these rooms is unknown. It is possible that the inventory clerk listed the pictures in the order in which he encountered them but that still leaves too many variables to allow for an accurate re-creation.³²⁸

The survival of accounts and earlier inventories, and the careful identification of subjects and sitters, allows an unusually thorough investigation of the origins of the picture collection displayed at Hardwick in 1601. It is possible to see that its beginnings lie far back in Bess's career in the collection of her second husband at Northaw, and that William Cavendish may have been a major influence on Bess's artistic development. It is obvious that, as with other parts of the furnishings, such as bed-hangings and carpets, it was quite acceptable to use old items to make an effect, without in any sense finding age to be itself inherently attractive. Bess's continued purchasing of pictures in the 1590s, despite already possessing a substantial collection largely amassed during the Chatsworth years, shows both that she recognised developing trends and wished to remain comparatively up to date, although within an essentially conservative range, and that she recognised that quantity was itself desirable in a picture collection. The

³²⁸ John Peacock, 'The Politics of Portraiture', in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 199-228 (pp. 216-7), makes confident assertions about the hang in the Long Gallery. However, I would disagree with his implication that the order in which the pictures are listed in the inventory is necessarily the order in which they would be seen. I would also suggest that greater understanding of the way in which the collection was compiled makes it less likely that Bess created a 'calculated and tendentious' display of portraits.

listing of the house's contents on a room-by-room basis gives an unusual opportunity to see how pictures were distributed around a house and it is revealing to see that, in this example at least, pictures were not limited to the long gallery. Although it would be inappropriate to consider Bess as a connoisseur, she is revealed as an owner who was fully aware of the potential of pictures as part of a great house's furnishings, who would not, perhaps, have subscribed to the unenthusiastic view that 'for most Elizabethans pictures were primarily wall furniture'.³²⁹

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to study the furnishings of Hardwick Hall as physical objects and this has been done by considering what Bess owned, how she acquired it, what she did with it and how these practices compared with those of her contemporaries. The value of the 1601 inventory as a source of evidence about what Bess owned has been confirmed, although thought must be given when reading it to the items which may be excluded because of the circumstances of its creation. Surviving household account books and earlier inventories have provided a great deal of information about how Bess acquired her furnishings. Many objects may be traced back to her earlier years at Chatsworth and even to Northaw, a house Bess left more than forty years before the building of Hardwick New Hall. It has also been shown that a number of items were purchased or made during the 1590s in order to augment her collections and, perhaps to a lesser extent, to bring them up to date. In several cases, especially in the purchase of tapestries and pictures, Bess's expenditure was not lavish and represents careful evaluation of costs against benefits. She had no need to be

³²⁹ Clark, 'The Buildings and Art Collections of Robert Dudley', p. 26.

extravagant; the bulk of her most luxurious furnishings were already in her possession, having been acquired for Chatsworth in the 1570s, the period of her greatest magnificence. Hardwick was essentially furnished second-hand from the contents of Chatsworth.

These 'hand-me-downs' were, however, extremely luxurious and gave Bess a considerable supply of furnishings with which to fill rooms in a manner appropriate to their social purposes. It has been shown that Bess created hierarchies of materials, using needlework, for example, on the highest quality chairs rather than rich fabrics, or showing a preference for gilt bedsteads in the best bed chambers. Once these patterns have been revealed it becomes easier to understand how furnishings were used to reinforce the hierarchies established by the architecture and by the social organisation of space, as discussed in the previous chapter. Although Bess's preferences sometimes reflect and at other times contrast with those of her contemporaries, they show her to have been operating within a decorative format which they would have understood. The furnishings define Bess's place in the social structure by their degree of luxury; they indicate Bess's desire to compete or not with other aristocrats by the amount of money which she chooses to spend on them; they emphasise the hierarchy of rooms by their gradations of materials; and within those rooms they reflect the degree of each individual occupant by the types of furnishings supplied and their materials. The physical qualities of the furnishings therefore present clear social messages which are just as strong as the intellectual and iconographic messages which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

The Furnishings and Decoration of Hardwick Hall as Iconographic Objects

In the previous chapter the furnishings of Hardwick Hall were considered as physical objects with material qualities. Here, the messages conveyed by the images on those furnishings and on the decoration of the Hall will be discussed and consideration will be given to an overall iconographic scheme.

It is generally accepted that the original audience for whom the decorations of Hardwick were intended, an educated social elite with some knowledge of fashionable taste, delighted in hidden meanings, allusions and devices in both literary and visual imagery. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that those who enjoyed this intellectual game would have expected to interpret the images depicted in their domestic surroundings and that this would have played an important part in the appreciation of an aristocrat's new house. By extension, an owner who wished to impress would have needed to give consideration to the iconographic content of his or her house's furnishings and decorations. Inevitably, perhaps, the owner's intentions and the viewer's interpretations would not necessarily coincide. There are few studies of this type of material to test these assumptions but James M. Sutton's survey of William Cecil's internal decorative scheme at Theobalds provides an interesting and relevant model for comparison.¹ Studies of the iconography of the decoration of Nonsuch Palace also demonstrate the possibilities of a scheme, albeit an external rather than an internal one.²

¹ James M. Sutton, 'The Decorative Program at Elizabethan Theobalds: Educating an Heir and Promoting a Dynasty', *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 7 (1999-2000), 33-64.

² For example, Martin Biddle, 'The Stuccoes of Nonsuch', *Burlington Magazine*, 126 (1984), 411-17.

Given the quantity of surviving material and the richness of the inventory evidence, it is perhaps surprising that few scholars have examined the question of an iconographic scheme at Hardwick in any depth. Anthony Wells-Cole has made the most detailed comments on it and his argument has been summarised above in Chapter One. In brief, he observes that the decoration of the ground floor relies on armorials and nature-inspired tapestries, that on the first floor biblical imagery is predominant, and that on the second floor these themes are joined by classical imagery. As previously suggested, in real terms the dominance of particular source material on each floor is less definite. Wells-Cole then draws attention to the theme of the Virtues, Justice, Mercy and Charity, 'exemplifying the qualities that Bess perceived as directing her relations to those with whom she came into contact and, in Charity, her most fundamental attitude towards human relations'. Above all, he suggests, Bess celebrates the qualities of patience and wifely virtue.³ Anthony Wells-Cole's attempt to find a scheme at Hardwick appears amongst his authoritative study of continental prints as a source for Elizabethan designs and so it is not surprising that his approach to Hardwick should be based on the nature of the source material, biblical, classical, natural and armorial, rather than the messages conveyed. His greater contribution to the understanding of Hardwick, however, must be his detailed identification of continental prints as the sources of so many of the images there. No attempt will be made, therefore, to identify sources in this chapter except where the source, or the development of the image from that source, itself forms part of the argument.

Bess's interest in the Virtues, which Wells-Cole notes, is also indirectly identified by Santina Levey, who writes that 'the 1601 inventory describes a

³ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 289-90.

unified scheme, based on personifications set within classical arches, spread across the Withdrawing Chamber, the Best Bedchamber and the passage that linked it to the Gallery'.⁴ Her approach to an overall scheme is based on visual style, the repetition of figures within niches, and deals only with this part of the building. Mark Girouard and Jean Wilson are amongst those who make generalised claims that the decoration of part, at least, of the Hall reveals Bess's intention to create a royal palace for a future Queen Arbella, and Wilson joins David Durant and others in observing that Hardwick was to serve as 'the ancestral location of the Cavendishes'.⁵ However, all these authors leave room for further more detailed discussion of the decorative themes at Hardwick.

Interpretation of an iconographic scheme, especially when it is sought over a large range of furnishings as well as structural decoration, inevitably leads to a certain degree of selection in the objects which are chosen for analysis. It would be a lengthy and tedious business to try to include all of the hundreds of objects listed in the 1601 inventory in any consideration of the decorative scheme. It would also be something of a nonsense to assume that all the furnishings of a great house carry an equal weight in communicating a message for the viewer. Bess's raw materials for the communication of these messages were not straightforward. As has been shown in Chapter Three, Hardwick's furnishings in 1601 came from a variety of sources. It may readily be accepted that the plasterwork and carved stone of the new building were designed to represent the ideas which Bess held at that time. Some of the furnishings were acquired at the same period that Hardwick was being built but many of them came from an earlier house at Chatsworth and even, in a few cases, from fifty years earlier at Northaw.

⁴ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 73.

⁵ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 15; Wilson, 'Why Fotheringhay?', pp. 20-1; Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 198.

Her decorative schemes at Hardwick therefore had to be constructed in some part from existing materials. Even when Bess did make purchases to augment her existing collections these were not always governed by considerations of iconography. It is suggested here, for example, that the *Ulysses* tapestries of the 'high great Chamber', probably purchased from Sir William Pickering, were acquired for practical reasons, including availability, rather than for their specific subject matter. How much more pertinent this argument must be when applied to Bess's purchase of the *Gideon* tapestries for the 'Gallerie', described in the previous chapter. It cannot be supposed that a purchaser wishing to acquire tapestries for such a large space would have had much choice if he or she intended to buy on the second-hand market. The subject matter of such purchases, therefore, must have been a matter of chance and it would be difficult to suggest that the stories of Gideon, Nathan or Abraham, for example, actively contributed to Bess's iconographic schemes at Hardwick, however much the tapestries themselves conveyed messages of wealth, status and magnificence by their physical presence. This is not an attempt to ignore furnishings which do not fall into the thematic categories to be discussed below. Rather, it highlights one essential difference between the furnishings to be analysed in detail and the rest: all the items to be discussed were commissioned by Bess or by Bess and her husband and she may therefore be assumed to have taken a direct interest in their subject matter rather than being dictated to by availability and the market place.

The items to be discussed in the main body of this chapter include most of the key components of the furnishings and structural decoration at Hardwick New Hall. An overview of these leads to the suggestion that there are three main themes which contribute to the iconographic scheme: the assertion of identity, the

government of the self, and the government of the nation. Through these themes Bess makes comments on her own sense of identity and that of her family, on the importance of virtue, and on Queen Elizabeth, the nation's ruler. Inevitably, the viewer observes a great deal about Bess's own moral and social values and about the purpose for which Hardwick was built.

The Assertion of Identity

This is the simplest and the most straightforward of the three themes to be discussed in this chapter. It is concerned with the ways in which Bess chose to stamp her own identity and that of her family and connections on the decorative scheme of the house. The theme rests principally on Bess's use of heraldry. Although this appears widely on a range of furnishings, it is discussed primarily in its immovable and more permanent form, in the stonework and plasterwork of the exterior decoration and the many elaborate heraldic overmantels which may be found throughout the building. Analysis suggests a clear strategy in Bess's use of heraldry but the final part of the discussion, which concentrates on her use of family portraits as part of the assertion of identity, reveals a less systematic application. Overall, it is clear that Bess was autocratic, proud, even arrogant, in her assertion of personal identity at Hardwick.

The decoration of Hardwick involves the use of many coats of arms, heraldic animals and personal initials. These appear on the exterior of the building, on internal features and on items of furnishing. They form a simple language and are clearly used in order to proclaim Bess's authority over her belongings and to convey to all onlookers that this is truly her property. To the modern eye this can seem arrogant or, alternatively, a sign of insecurity, but to the

contemporary it would have seemed appropriate and customary, although no less powerful for that familiarity. Although still a relevant language in the late sixteenth century, heraldry inevitably recalled a sense of tradition, longevity and continuity, and was a shorthand for indicating the power and authority of the individuals or families so depicted. As the near-contemporary John Guillim wrote,

Armes are tokens or resemblances, signifying some act or quality of the bearer. How great the dignitie and estimation of Armes ever hath beene, and yet is, we may easily conceive by this, that as they doe delight the beholders, and greatly grace and beautifie the places wherein they are erected; so also they doe occasion their spectators to make serious inquisition whose they are, who is the owner of the house wherein they are set up, of what Familie their bearer is descended, and who were his next, and who his remote Parents or Ancestors.⁶

These two strands, the evocation of traditional power and the simplicity of the language appear to be at the heart of Bess's usage of heraldry.

Bess used heraldry on a variety of items, including textiles, furniture and paintings, but the discussion here will concentrate on its use in structural stonework and plasterwork. This is its most decisive form: bold, enduring and permanent. Unlike the lesser, movable objects, this heraldry is inherently related to particular parts of the house and may therefore be used to proclaim messages associated with the differing social purposes of those areas. Much of this stonework and plasterwork has survived, although there are some rooms of the

⁶ John Guillim, *A Display of Heraldrie* (London: [n. pub], 1610), p. 2, quoted in Christy Anderson, 'Learning to Read Architecture in the English Renaissance', in *Albion's Classicism: The Visual Arts in Britain, 1550-1660*, ed. by Lucy Gent (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 239-86, (p. 262).

house, especially at the north end, where subsequent alterations have removed overmantels which may well originally have carried heraldic decoration. In addition, where the shapes of the heraldry or the heraldic beasts are actually moulded, they may be considered as more definite than where the arms have been merely painted onto the smooth surface of a moulded shield. In several places, most notably the overmantel of 'my Ladies with drawing Chamber', subsequent repainting of a shield has brought the arms into question. With these considerations in mind, however, it is still possible to deduce a distinct programme in Bess's use of heraldry as structural ornament.

Bess's choice of personal arms is itself significant. As a married woman, now widowed, it would be customary for her to display arms which incorporated those of her husband. However, as both wife and widow she chooses to represent herself by the use of the Hardwick arms, the arms of her birth family, with their supporter stags.⁷ As wife her arms had often appeared alongside her husband's, as well as impaled with them, but as widow her arms appear alone.⁸ There is a clear intention to identify herself with her past family rather than with any of her husbands and to perpetuate the importance of her own lineage rather than theirs, perhaps through sentiment, perhaps through antagonism towards Shrewsbury, her last husband. Shrewsbury seems to have been banished from Bess's sense of identity except for one vital detail: Bess's Hardwick arms are topped by a countess's coronet. In strict terms this makes a nonsense of the rules of heraldry

⁷ In strict terms, the Hardwick family, not being of the peerage, had no rights to supporters. The supporters seem to have been Bess's invention, being based on the legitimate family crest - *on a mount vert a stag courant proper, gorged with a chaplet of roses* - altered to an appropriate upright position. They were later adopted by the Cavendishes.

⁸ The verre églomisé panel now displayed in the Drawing Room at Hardwick (HHE/F/805) gives a clear depiction of her arms during her last marriage. The Hardwick arms form the central design of the panel but in either top corner is a representation of Talbot impaling Hardwick beneath an Earl's coronet. Similarly, the appliqué panels of Virtuous Women, which will be discussed later in this chapter, show her arms alongside Talbot's.

since it is not the Hardwick name which makes Bess a countess and she is not a peeress in her own right, but as a message to the world it is clear and unambiguous. Bess is proud to be a Hardwick and proud to be a countess. Her choice of arms, however, also carries a third message. By choosing to emphasise her paternal arms, Bess makes no acknowledgement of her children and those who will succeed her. Although Hardwick would form part of the heraldic quarterings to which they were entitled, Hardwick alone would not signal them to the world.⁹ This prominent marking of the house with armorials which apply only to Bess seems to deny any claim that Hardwick was intended as the home of a new dynasty, built, perhaps, with her favoured son, William Cavendish, in mind, or even as a setting for Arbella, a putative future queen. This particular choice of arms in the new house begins and ends with Bess.

Bess's chosen arms appear in several significant parts of the house. They are seen first on the cresting above the gatehouse, where they reinforce Bess's authority over this important and symbolic threshold, and then on the roof of the main building, where there were originally two sets, one facing east and one west. The position above the parapet is unusual and it would seem that Bess sought to make her identity and the ownership of the building clear at the greatest possible distance. That the arms are in practice less distinct than the initials, 'ES', which also rise above the parapet, does not weaken the general message. The placing of the owner's arms on the main front of a house at this period was not unusual – Hatfield and Montacute, for example, place arms above the doors – but the prominent and elevated positioning of them at Hardwick appears unique. In most contemporary cases the external display of heraldry was less insistent than in

⁹ Neither her Cavendish children nor their descendants appear to have made use of the Hardwick arms in their quarterings.

houses built earlier in the century when, as Maurice Howard observes, in the changing and unsettling conditions of the early Tudor period, the 'desire for a sense of history emerged in the persistence of the cult of chivalry, displayed in heraldry on the buildings themselves and on their original contents'.¹⁰ Bess's own earlier Chatsworth had two sets of arms let into the gatehouse face, the Hardwick arms immediately above the entrance arch and the Cavendish arms on the floor above, at levels which may predate the addition of the new second floor in the 1570s.¹¹ It is reasonable to wonder whether Bess's fondness for asserting her identity through the extremely prominent public display of heraldry was not a little old-fashioned.

The same arms are used in the 'hale', the first reception space of the house, where they appear in plasterwork above the fireplace, dominating the space and naturally having greater command than they do when seen on the roofline (illustration 44). As described in Chapter Two, the room has a two-fold purpose, being both the lower servants' hall and part of the route to the state rooms on the second floor. Any decoration, therefore, would be seen by two audiences of quite different social levels but for one set of viewers it would presumably be a brief acquaintance as they passed through to statelier rooms. The simple and straightforward message of the heraldry appears to be intended primarily for the lower social orders. For them, Bess is the absent authority figure. In previous times the great hall might have been a place in which the different social groups who constituted the household would have gathered. Social change, reflected in evolving uses of architectural space, resulted in the separation of social groups

¹⁰ Maurice Howard, *The Early Tudor Country House: Architecture and Politics 1490-1550* (London: George Philip, 1987), p. 9.

¹¹ There is no indication in either the surviving ruins or the Audley End drawing that Hardwick Old Hall ever had an external display of heraldry.

within the household. The master or mistress of the house had other spaces in which to live and entertain. Bess would not, therefore, be expected to be present in the hall often and yet it remains crucial that her authority as the focus of the house be maintained. The heraldry places Bess symbolically at the heart of her household. It also places her at the heart of a tradition of family government. Heraldry, with its emphasis on family and succession, gives an impression of continuity with the past and reinforces an idea of permanence and authority derived from custom and long practice. Hardwick Hall itself might be a new building but Bess wishes to associate herself with a long tradition of authority in her family's hands on the Hardwick site, emphasised by her choice of the Hardwick family arms. The hall, the traditional centre of manorial authority, is the key site in which to make this association and her workers and tenants are the key audience.¹²

The same arms seem to convey a slightly different message when used on the landing outside the 'high great Chamber'. They appear in a relatively small scale above the door which leads from the head of the stairs into the first and most elaborate of the state rooms. Here they mark a threshold between Bess's domain and the notional domain of the Queen. Bess's arms dominate the public areas of the house and the first parts of the ceremonial route, where she is undoubtedly the figure of authority. Once within the state rooms, although there is no doubt that the contemporary visitor remains within Bess's house, the authority has been given up by the loyal subject to her monarch. Just as Bess was the absent authority figure in the 'hale', so the Queen is the absent authority figure in the 'high great

¹² It was noted in Chapter Three that the sense of continuity with the past could have been strengthened by the hanging of some of the fifteenth century tapestries now known as the Devonshire Hunting tapestries in the hall. Old even by the standards of Bess's collection of furnishings, they may have reinforced claims of unchanging authority and continuity.

Chamber' and it is her arms and regal qualities which dominate there, as will be discussed later in this chapter. Bess's arms above the outside of the door mark this transition.

Within the family rooms of the house, at the south end of the first floor, there is some variation in the heraldry. The plasterwork above the fireplace in 'my Ladies with drawing Chamber' still represents Bess in heraldry but it is in a different format (illustration 45). Here Bess displays the quartered arms of Hardwick and an unidentified other. Later repainting has misinterpreted the female quarterings so that they are now meaningless but it is likely that the intended quarterings were those used on Bess's tomb and on the replacement shields made to cover Hatton's arms on the Gideon tapestries (illustration 46). These show Hardwick quartering arms which may be blazoned as *argent, a fess sable, in chief three mullets sable*. Unfortunately, these arms have so far proved impossible to identify with any family connected with Bess's known lineage.¹³ It is obvious that Bess is trying to make a statement about her ancestry, perhaps about its status or longevity, but the exact message is unclear. The arms are not those of her mother, Elizabeth Leake, which would be the obvious choice. The Heralds' Visitations of 1569 and 1611 noted the marriages of the principal male Hardwicks back through four generations but none of those brides brought these arms into the family.¹⁴ Nor may the arms be associated with any other actual or

¹³ Although no connection is currently identifiable, these arms were borne by the Barrett, Denny, Dye, Dyneley, Legh, Towneley, Watford and Whitehull families at various times. John Woody Papworth, *An Alphabetical Dictionary of Coats of Arms Belonging to Families in Great Britain and Ireland* (London: T. Richards, 1874); Sir Bernard Burke, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales* (London: Harrison, 1884; repr. Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1969). The attempt to identify the arms continues.

¹⁴ *Derbyshire Visitation Pedigrees 1569 and 1611* (London: [n. pub.], 1895), pp. 45-6. The Hardwick pedigree as depicted in Harl. MSS 6592, fol. 22, is reproduced in Sir Montague Barlow, *Barlow Family Records* ([n. p.]: [n. pub.], [1932]).

semi-mythical marriages.¹⁵ Until the heraldry is successfully identified the exact meaning of this depiction must remain unclear but it is obvious from the use of quarterings that Bess is making an appeal to her own lineage and to an historical alliance, presumably with an heiress, which was of some value to the Hardwick name. The message is plainly intended to be a little more sophisticated than that given by the Hardwick arms alone.

Once again, however, these arms make no allowance for her descendants and tie this space to Bess herself and her Hardwick forebears, not to those who might succeed her at Hardwick. This may be reiterated in the motto placed beneath the arms on the overmantel. It reads,

SANGUINE, CORNU CORDE OCULO, PEDE CERVUS

ET AURE / NOBILIS. AT CLARO PONDERE NOBILIOR

The stag, noble in blood, horn, heart, eye, foot and ear, and made more noble by the fame of its burden.

Stags, noble animals in themselves, are made more noble by their association with the name of Hardwick, which they serve by supporting the arms. By heraldic chance there is a hint of a reference to Cavendish as stags' heads appear also on the Cavendish arms, but the stags on the overmantel carry the burden of arms on which the Cavendish heraldry is not mentioned and so it is clear that the Hardwick name and Bess herself are being celebrated, not her Cavendish family. However, the current lettering is undoubtedly comparatively recent and there is no clear evidence that the motto was contemporary, rather than having been fitted in an

¹⁵ Harl. MSS 6582 shows that the heralds recorded a marriage with the Sendfield family of Kirkby in Ashfield, Notts., during the reign of Edward III and a less definite alliance between Sir Joceline Henermere, alias Hardwick, and a member of the Deyncourt family.

opportunistic, if rather ungainly, fashion into the gaps in the strapwork at some later date.¹⁶

Unlike the public areas of the house, where the Hardwick arms are used alone for symbolic effect, the 'with drawing Chamber' is in the family part of the house where intimates might be received but where there is no public role or audience. Two more of these family rooms also have heraldic plasterwork over the fireplaces and the presence of this decoration helps to fix the original purposes of these spaces. The room in the south-east turret, identified as 'my ladie Arbells Chamber', has heraldry which represents her lineage (illustration 47). The large central arms now carry an inaccurate representation which was probably based on the quartering of Hardwick and the unidentified arms described above and thus referred to Bess's lineage.¹⁷ The smaller arms in the top left corner represent Talbot and Hardwick under a coronet, and those in the right corner the union of Charles Stuart and Elizabeth Cavendish, again under a coronet.¹⁸ The plasterwork thus represents Arbella's distant Hardwick pedigree, her grandmother and parents but not directly Arbella herself. The equivalent room in the south-west turret, which has here been identified as the 'Prodigall Chamber', contains heraldry celebrating Talbot and may be interpreted as marking Mary Cavendish, Countess of Shrewsbury, Bess's daughter, in a room probably reserved for Mary and Gilbert Talbot to use during their visits (illustration 48).¹⁹ Here, the large central

¹⁶ The origin of these lines of praise is unknown. There is no evidence that the Hardwick family ever had a formal motto.

¹⁷ Although Hardwick is recognisable in the repainting, the arms in the 2nd and 3rd quarters are not. It is likely that they are imaginatively based on the remains of the familiar *fess sable*.

¹⁸ If original, the depiction of Talbot and Hardwick at this date is very unusual. The coronet above the shield is essential for balance in the composition, as well as any symbolic meanings, but Bess was usually happy to use the Hardwick arms beneath the coronet.

¹⁹ This would provide a sensible reason for the placing there of a portrait of 'Lady Elizabeth Talbott'. Her identity is uncertain but one good candidate would be Elizabeth, one of the three daughters and co-heiresses of Mary and Gilbert Talbot, who married Henry Grey, Earl of Kent, in 1601.

arms show a multiple quartering of the arms of Shrewsbury inside a Garter, apparently without any reference to Cavendish. The shield is supported by two talbots and the Talbot cap of maintenance and crest, all of which are moulded in plaster and are therefore definite in form. The Talbot motto, '*Prest D'Acomplir*', has been painted below the arms but it is impossible to tell whether this obvious repainting has any authentic origins. The two lesser shields at the top of the design are Talbot impaling Hardwick and Talbot impaling Cavendish, each under a coronet.

These two elaborate fireplaces therefore celebrate the two daughters who achieved places amongst the peerage, Mary, Countess of Shrewsbury, and Elizabeth, Countess of Lennox. It is clear that Bess puts enormous value on the acquisition of a coronet and the social power that goes with it. However, it is notable that these more complex displays of lineage are in the seclusion of the family rooms and would not have been visible to a wider audience. Perhaps strangely, the message seems to be entirely internalised and serves only to affirm and celebrate what is already well-known to the viewer rather than to instruct anew.

Heraldic plasterwork remains in only two spaces in the semi-public rooms at the northern end of the first floor. The Hardwick arms appear in the 'little dining Chamber', although as part of a frieze rather than over the fireplace, but the 'Shipp bed Chamber' overmantel contains the only surviving heraldic representation of all Bess's children and their spouses (illustration 49). Precedence on the top line is given to the three members of the family who achieved countesses' coronets, Bess herself, represented by the Hardwick arms alone, and Mary and Elizabeth represented by their married arms. The less

socially elevated offspring are relegated to the sides and it is likely that the large central shield, whose painting is now confused, would have had the arms of Cavendish, possibly impaling Hardwick, marking the marriage which produced the children. Although this heraldry appears at first to nod towards the next generation and the future, this is a false vision. The real celebration is of the three countesses, Bess and two of her daughters, but neither Mary nor Elizabeth could have a role in Hardwick's future. Mary, as Countess of Shrewsbury and with surviving brothers, had no legal interest in Hardwick and Elizabeth, Countess of Lennox, had been dead since 1582. Had the arms of William Cavendish, Hardwick's designated inheritor, been given prominence then the set could have been considered as forward-looking but, as they are, they seem to celebrate only Bess's achievement in founding a dynasty – and in achieving advantageous marriages into the peerage for some of them – rather than the future of that dynasty itself.

As will be shown in the subsequent sections of this chapter, the decorative themes in the state rooms of the second floor are not overly concerned with the rather basic and worldly representations of individual and family. As already mentioned, Bess's authority is seen metaphorically to end at the entrance to the 'high great Chamber' and a higher authority takes over. However, in the innermost of the state rooms there is a definite intrusion of Bess's personal and family identity and the most honoured guest is reminded of his or her hostess in forceful terms, this time through the use of heraldry on textiles rather than in plasterwork.

As described in the previous chapter, the best bed consisted of 'a fayre lardge sparver and bedeshead with double vallans of cloth of golde, cloth of

silver; sondrie Coulers of velvet imbrodered fayre with divers armes with portalls and pictures, and with a golde frence'.²⁰ There are now eight large and twenty-eight small panels of crimson velvet worked with heraldic motifs surviving which must have contributed to the decoration of the bed and its associated hangings. Through initials, heraldry and heraldic crests they present a form of family tree of Bess and her relatives. Amongst the surviving pieces are elements representing three of Bess's husbands (her first husband, Robert Barlow, has no part to play), four of her children with their spouses, and Bess herself (illustration 50). If the set has survived intact, two of the children, William and Charles, are missing. Santana Levey assumes that they were not represented because they had yet to marry and uses this as part of an argument to date the panels to the period 1574-1581.²¹ Whilst it is possible that a celebration of marriage was intended for the bed and that unmarried adult children were therefore excluded from the decorative scheme, it appears just as likely that William's and Charles's panels have been lost and that the surviving set should not be considered complete.²²

The heraldic hangings are a considerable intrusion into state rooms where Bess's personal identity is otherwise muted. The best bed is, in such an establishment, deeply symbolic of power and authority. It would not be occupied by a family member but by an important visitor, perhaps the monarch or a representative. In this scheme the bed's occupant is almost literally wrapped in a symbolic reminder of Bess and her family. At one level, Bess may wish to record her family's loyalty to the monarch but the much louder message is a proclamation of Bess's achievement in creating such connections with families of

²⁰ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 45.

²¹ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 70.

²² Charles married in 1581 and William in 1582. It would not have been a difficult task to make their panels retrospectively.

current and historical consequence. Inventories reveal many best beds which carried representations of the owner's arms but it appears less customary to use this large and symbolic space as a canvas on which to paint a genealogy.

Bess used heraldry on a range of other objects, including textiles, mirrors, plate and at least one piece of furniture, the 'Eglantine table'. Briefly, this table is decorated with very complex inlay, including heraldry marking the marriages of Bess and Talbot, and Henry Cavendish and Grace Talbot, together with heraldic beasts and the Cavendish and Talbot families' mottoes (illustration 51).²³

Although the table appears to celebrate the union of the two families, it must have been commissioned by the Hardwick-Cavendish side. The central cartouche carries a verse which reads, 'The redolent smle / of Aeglentyne / We stagges exauet / to the deveyne'. The eglantine is Queen Elizabeth and the stags most conveniently represent both Hardwick and Cavendish.²⁴ The Talbots are not included in this pious oath of loyalty to the monarch. Unlike the architectural plasterwork, however, and, to a lesser extent, the best bed, these objects are smaller, portable and less significant. They offer a general celebration of Bess through the medium of heraldry, sometimes Hardwick alone, sometimes Hardwick with others, but do not offer the clear message of the larger and more permanent works.

²³ The third marriage which took place at this time, that between Mary Cavendish and Gilbert Talbot, does not appear on the table. Perhaps the marriage of a youngest daughter and a younger son was considered less important. Gilbert did not become his father's heir until the death of his elder brother in 1582. At that time their stock must have risen considerably in Bess's eyes, as illustrated by the Talbot overmantel in the 'Prodigall Chamber', created after Gilbert and Mary's elevation to the earldom.

²⁴ Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987; repr. London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 68-78, considers the identification of Queen Elizabeth with the eglantine. He mentions the Hardwick table briefly (p. 70) but seems to place it in the 1590s, whereas most authorities consider that it dates to the period of the triple marriages in 1567-8.

Bess's use of heraldry is focussed firmly on herself and her family. It is first her identity which is asserted and then her family's. There is no discernible attempt to use heraldry to identify a wider society, except in the loyal use of the Queen's arms in the overmantel of the 'high great Chamber' and on a painted glass there. Bess does not seem to use decorative heraldry in the way in which William Cecil had done at Theobalds, for example, where the Green Gallery contained representations of the arms of the peers and barons of England, arranged according to counties, or the Fairfaxes had done at Gilling Castle with their depiction of the arms of the gentlemen of Yorkshire.²⁵ Bess's heraldic decoration is essentially insular, turned inward upon herself and her immediate family. There is no attempt to place herself and her family within a wider society or to make any link except to the monarch. This, at least, appears to be the case from the surviving structural decoration and furnishings. Tantalisingly, amongst the paintings listed in the 1601 inventory of Hardwick are fifteen tables with arms set in them, twelve in the 'low great Chamber' and three in 'my Ladies with drawing Chamber', as well as one 'frame with armes paynted in it' in store in the 'wardrop'.²⁶ There is no way of identifying the arms depicted in these lost items.

Heraldry allows a symbolic representation of families and individuals. A more realistic representation is offered by portraiture and some conclusions may be drawn from a consideration of Bess's dispersal of family pictures around the house and the relationship between them and the other portraits hanging there. Where pictures hang in close proximity the viewer almost inevitably seeks to make connections between them and so a picture hang may be used to transmit messages about the subjects and about the owner responsible for the display. The

²⁵ Sutton, 'The Decorative Program at Elizabethan Theobalds', pp. 39-43.

²⁶ *Of Household Stuff*, pp. 52, 53 and 45.

pictures at Hardwick in 1601, which are listed by room in Appendix Six, may be considered in this light as part of the discussion of the assertion of identity.

It has already been noted that decorative heraldry is used to mark a change between the public areas of the house and the state rooms on the second floor where the authority passes notionally to the Queen. This transition is largely but not exclusively echoed in the arrangement of portraits in the state rooms. There are no pictures of Bess or her immediate connections in the 'high great Chamber'. As will be discussed below, the decoration of this room contains the strongest reference to the power of Queen Elizabeth and the pictures displayed there represent the Queen and her three immediate predecessors alongside people of European significance, Charles V and the Duke of Alva, and, perhaps strangely, three clerics, Wolsey, Gardiner and Pole, with depictions of the four parts of the world and a looking glass painted with the arms of England. The scheme here appears to reflect the wider authority and influence of the Queen and, in a notably humble gesture, the loyal Bess has not intruded into it.

Next door, in the 'Gallerie', the situation is only a little different. Of the forty paintings there, nearly all of which are portraits, only seven represent Bess's family or close connections. Bess herself is depicted there, with George Talbot, Henry Cavendish, Ann Cavendish (Bess's late daughter-in-law), Arbella, her father, Charles Stuart, Earl of Lennox, and his father, Matthew Stuart, Earl of Lennox. The majority of the paintings in the 'Gallerie' represent a series of English monarchs spanning from Edward II to Elizabeth, contemporary kings of Scotland, France and Spain, and a small number of English peers. The organisation of the hang is unknown and so it is impossible to comment on how the family pictures related to the others but it is clear that Bess found it

appropriate to allow some representations of her family into the company of their social superiors. This would possibly have given the viewer a sense that Bess' family was worthy of this association, that they shared in the sense of longevity and legitimacy given by the series of English monarchs, and that they had some role upon the international and national stages. However, it is difficult to interpret this as either a sophisticated or a whole-hearted attempt on Bess's part to make a profound statement about her family's identity. Only a very small number of the current family has been represented in this gallery and they are by no means the most important members, and there is no attempt to create an impressive series of portraits of ancestors, as Cecil had done at Theobalds, in order to emphasise lineage in complement to the line of royal ancestors.²⁷

It is clear from the list of paintings that Bess did not lack portraits of her family. Most are to be found in the 'lowe great Chamber' on the floor below and a few have crept into one of the remaining state rooms, the 'with drawing Chamber'. In this room, too, the inventory of pictures seems to suggest that Bess did not have a clear strategy in place for asserting identity through the use of paintings. The room appears at first to be a commemoration of Bess's involvement with the Scottish royal family, since it contains a portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the two large double portraits of Mary and Darnley, and James V and Mary of Guise, both of which survive. The motivation for this choice cannot now be known for certain but it is reasonable to suggest that it may have been the desire to mark a period in Bess's own life which she considered to have been the most significant. The portrait of the Earl of Leicester does not seem too out of place in this company but Sir William St. Loe, Mary, Countess of

²⁷ Sutton, 'The Decorative Program at Elizabethan Theobalds', pp. 43-50.

Shrewsbury, Charles Cavendish and his first wife, Margaret Kitson, do not seem to have any connection with the apparent dominant theme of the pictures here. This room emphasises the idea that Bess is, in fact, making very little use of portraits to make a clear assertion of family identity in the state rooms.

One remaining room does, however, appear to show a clearer strategy. The 'lowe great Chamber' seems to give an emphatic message about Bess's family. There, a portrait of Bess herself is joined by pictures of George Talbot, Thomas Cavendish, Sir William Cavendish, William Cavendish the elder (Bess's son), William Cavendish the younger (her grandson), Arbella, Charles, Earl of Lennox, and Margaret, Countess of Lennox. In addition, there is a glass painted with Bess's arms and the mysterious twelve tables with arms set in them. The only intruders into the family circle are Queen Elizabeth, Lord Burleigh and the Virgin Mary. These pictures give a very clear statement of family authority and continuity, with four generations of the family being represented. The portrait of Thomas Cavendish, Bess's father-in-law, is the only picture in the house to look backwards into the family's ancestors and it is noticeable that there are no Hardwick ancestors depicted, despite Bess's assertion of her family arms and name which has been discussed above.²⁸ It is significant that this one clear use of portraits to assert family identity is in a room which had a number of functions and was probably one of the busiest in the house. It served as an upper servants' hall, as an outer room for the good guest accommodation to be found at the northern end of the house, and as a receiving room for visitors of a status too modest to deserve the state rooms above. It was probably the room in which Bess most commonly made her 'public' appearances. In practical, day-to-day terms it

²⁸ As was noted in Chapter Three, the portrait of Thomas Cavendish may well be identified with a portrait of him in the Northaw inventory.

must have been one of the most important rooms in the whole house. Thus, the message of family identity, longevity and authority would be received there by a great number of people, most of them Bess's social inferiors. Bess's message is clearest where it can bring her the most advantage.

Bess's use of heraldry throughout the house makes clear statements about the assertion of identity. Her use of family portraits, which might reasonably have been supposed to endorse the message of the heraldry, seems, with the one exception of the 'low great Chamber', to be much weaker and it is more problematic to suggest a sophisticated strategy rather than a half-hearted or even random distribution. It has been shown in Chapter Three that Bess was actively collecting paintings at this time but, whilst she shows awareness of fashions in collecting, she has not yet, perhaps, developed an eye for the possibilities of grouping pictures, particularly with regard to family portraits. However, the paintings are all movable and it would not be difficult for her to have created other patterns. Her assertions of identity are much stronger, though, in the static heraldry which appears in stone and plaster. There it is possible to demonstrate that Bess's primary interest is in the Hardwick name and the authority and continuity for which it would stand in a building on the Hardwick site. Talbot, her most socially elevated husband, is commemorated only by the countess' coronet which Bess improperly and arrogantly attaches to the Hardwick arms. The heraldry shows that she places herself and her Hardwick family connection above her children, who are primarily celebrated heraldically when they achieve entry to the peerage. William Cavendish, the favoured son and intended inheritor of Hardwick, has very little heraldic attention and so there is no intention to allow for a sense of ongoing continuity beyond Bess. Nor is there any heraldic evidence

that Hardwick was being prepared for a future monarch, Arbella. Indeed, Bess's supremacy is diminished only when authority is passed symbolically to the monarch.

The early visitors to Hardwick who viewed the heraldry with John Guillim's recommendations in mind 'to make serious inquisition whose [arms] they are, who is the owner of the house wherein they are set up, of what Familie their bearer is descended, and who were his next, and who his remote Parents or Ancestors', would have had no difficulty in identifying Bess and her Hardwick family lineage. In addition, it would have been quite clear to them that the new Hardwick Hall began and ended with Elizabeth Hardwick herself.

Government of the Self

With this theme the emphasis of the decorative scheme moves from the worldliness of heraldry and social status to the more personal concerns of virtue and morality. The government of the self embodies the idea that the individual may improve himself or herself through moral instruction, expelling those traits which are found to be vicious and acquiring or strengthening virtuous or moral qualities. Governed by virtuous qualities, each person would be individually improved but would also form a stronger link in the chain which together formed society and the nation. Bess's contemporaries would have been familiar with the process through literary and visual sources and their responses would have been based on both their Christian and their classical knowledge and experience. It is this latter source which supplies most of the imagery in this part of Bess's iconographic scheme, such as the appliqué hangings depicting virtuous women and the cushion covers illustrating stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. As will be

seen, a religious text is used in a specific social context where the viewers of the moral message come from Bess's household rather than her social peers.

The most important element of this scheme is the panels representing classical heroines flanked by their virtues, which date from the early 1570s.²⁹ The 1601 inventory lists these five panels as 'pictures of the vertues, one of Zenobia, magnanimitas and prudentia, an other of Arthemitia, Constantia and pietas, an other of penelope, prudentia, and sapientia, an other of Cleopatra, fortituto, and Justitia, an other of Lucretia, Charitas and liberalitas'.³⁰ As striking examples of Elizabethan textiles, these panels have been widely described but they have also been the subject of detailed studies by Richard Pick, Margaret Ellis and Sophia Holroyd.³¹ Whilst each of these authors considers the hangings from his or her own perspective and has much to say that is interesting and relevant, all have accepted the basic premise that the panels present simple depictions of virtuous women which would have been readily understood by contemporaries. However, it will be suggested here that the panels are a little less coherent than has been assumed previously.

Four of the panels have survived but the Cleopatra panel has been lost except for a few fragments which do not include the figures. Survival of the Penelope and Lucretia panels shows that the documentary evidence of the inventory and the physical evidence of the hangings do not always agree. According to the inventory, Penelope is joined by 'prudentia' and 'sapientia', whereas the flanking figures to be seen on the panel are clearly 'paciens' and 'perseverans' (illustration 52). Similarly, Lucretia is described in the inventory as

²⁹ The Artemesia panel bears the date 1573.

³⁰ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 47.

³¹ Pick, 'The Worthy Ladies of Hardwick Hall', pp. 115-134; Ellis, 'The Hardwick Wall-Hangings', pp. 280-300; and Holroyd, 'Embroidered Rhetoric', pp. 118-147.

sharing her panel with 'Charitas and liberalitas', whilst the hanging itself shows us 'chasteti' and 'liberaliter' (illustration 53). The reason for this difference is not clear. It is possible that the inventory-taker simply made a mistake, although it is strange that it was never noticed and corrected. Alternatively, it is conceivable that altered names were embroidered during restoration of the panels in the early twentieth century or before, a possibility made stronger by the apparent use of English rather than proper Latin words. From a superficial inspection, changes during restoration seem possible in the case of the Penelope panel, where the embroidery of the words appears to be in comparatively good condition, but the embroidery of the words on the Lucretia panel is in less good condition and, in conjunction with the visual imagery, it seems more likely in this case that the inventory clerk was in error.³² This confusion is unhelpful in attempting to interpret the messages of the panels but it may be observed that the variant words are at least all within the same themes and do not call into question the basic contention that these panels presented the viewer with an array of moral qualities which he – or especially she – should interpret and internalise.

It is immediately apparent that this is a parade both of virtues and of virtuous women which would have been familiar in format to all viewers. The collection of exempla to provide a moral lesson reinforced by the quantity and repetition of its subject matter was both a literary and visual commonplace. The richness of the viewer's response would inevitably depend on the depth of his or her knowledge of the subject matter. At one level, these panels give a very easy lesson but at another level they leave a lot to the viewer's imagination. With one exception – that of Pero, who stands for pietas in the Artemesia panel – the

³² The panels are currently considered too fragile to be removed from their glazed frames for closer study or conservation.

flanking figures which represent the virtues are not identifiable characters, although they appear with traditional attributes, such as the unicorn which accompanies chastity.³³ However, the virtues for which they stand are literally named above them and the viewer is not required to interpret the figures themselves, merely to read the words. In one sense, therefore, the panels merely provide a checklist of virtues which anyone could understand, however limited his or her knowledge of the classical sources. Ironically, if simple communication is the guiding principle, the panels do not directly present the stories of the central figures, the good women from classical history. Unlike, for example, the cushion covers derived from *Metamorphoses* discussed below, there is no attempt to depict a continuous narrative which might be used to teach the story to a less informed viewer; instead, each heroine is depicted in a single pose characteristic of one moment in her life. Thus Lucretia is pictured in the act of killing herself with a dagger, Penelope leans on a rolled piece of weaving, Zenobia stands with lance and armour and Artemesia holds up the cup in which she has dissolved her husband's ashes. If the viewers have no prior knowledge then they are no wiser but the contriver of these figures must be assuming that the viewers have an existing knowledge with which to complete the narratives for themselves. In this sense, they could have the more sophisticated quality of a mnemonic device to stimulate the viewer's own memories.

Four, at least, of these women would have been well-known to educated viewers as positive moral examples. Cleopatra, who will be discussed below, might have surprised them. Penelope, Lucretia, Zenobia and Artemesia appear in various groupings in a range of popular moral texts available at that time,

³³ This attribute is, of course, appropriate if the embroidered reference to chastity is accepted rather than the inventory reading of charity.

including Christine de Pisan's *Book of the City of Ladies*, translated and published by Brian Ansley in 1521, Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus*, and Elyot's *The Defence of Good Women*. Although the authors attribute slightly different qualities to their subjects according to the purpose or central theme of the writing, each heroine tends to stay within the same narrow moral field. No single text has been found which serves as a source for these panels as a complete group and so it is necessary to discuss the heroines' virtues as they would be known to a contemporary from a range of sources.

Penelope is the most pacific and docile of the heroines and her chief virtue was generally acknowledged to be her chastity. Thus for Christine de Pisan she was 'gretely praysed for her chastyte' and 'wyse & prudent'.³⁴ For Boccaccio she was 'a woman of untarnished honor and inviolate chastity, and a holy and eternal example for women', who chose to grow old in 'chaste and eternal widowhood'.³⁵ Robert Greene, in his dedicatory epistle which introduces *Penelopes Web*, asserts that he has chosen his subject 'for that she was chaste [...] so some by glancing at this toy may take a president of her chastitie'.³⁶ Chastity was the virtue which most viewers would immediately identify with the figure of Penelope in the panels and yet she is not specifically connected to it in the design, either by the inventory description crediting her with 'prudencia, and sapientia', which at least has resonance with Christine de Pisan's 'wyse & prudent', or by the embroidered captions which allude to her 'paciens' and 'perseverans'. Any contemporary viewer would surely have been surprised by the absence of an allusion to chastity.

³⁴ Christine de Pisan, *The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes*, trans. by Brian Ansley (London: [n. pub.], 1521), no pagination, part 2 chapter 41.

³⁵ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Concerning Famous Women*, trans. by Guido A. Guarino (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1963), p. 81.

³⁶ Robert Greene, *Penelopes Web* (London: [n. pub.], 1587), no pagination.

It is possible that Penelope was denied her chastity in the attempt to avoid repetition, as it is almost certainly accorded here to Lucretia instead. However, it is not an unshakeable premise that the designer of these panels sought to avoid repetition, as the inventory accords 'prudencia' to both Zenobia and Penelope. The preferred allocation of chastity to Lucretia seems appropriate to that heroine and is borne out by the unicorn with which the figure of chastity is pictured and by the word 'chasteti' above her. The physical evidence seems compelling this time and throws into doubt the inventory's offered 'Charitas'. Shakespeare's 'Lucrece the chaste' had been, for Christine de Pisan, 'souerayne in chastyte amonge all ye ladyes of Rome', and for Boccaccio she provided 'the outstanding model of Roman chastity', who could 'never be sufficiently lauded'.³⁷ Lucretia's liberality seems less straightforward and would not have been so well-known to contemporaries. It must apply to the hospitality which she showed to her husband and his friends, Tarquin amongst them, when they arrived unexpectedly as part of an experiment to test their wives, but this part of the story is usually abbreviated rather than celebrated. Boccaccio is the only one of the sources being used in this discussion to make anything of it. However, the survival in the Victoria and Albert Museum of a needlework table carpet depicting the Banquet of Lucrece demonstrates that Bess's usage is not unique.³⁸ Nevertheless, Ruth Kelso has noted that the virtue of liberality, when applied to a woman, was usually confined to the giving of alms, and that liberality in the sense of lavish hospitality or

³⁷ *The Rape of Lucrece*, in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 269-89, (p. 271, line 7); Pisan, *The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes*, part 2 chapter 44; Boccaccio, *Concerning Famous Women*, pp. 101 and 103.

³⁸ Museum Number T.125-1913. The panel is French in origin and taken from a design by Philips Galle.

magnificent show was only suitable for a man.³⁹ As with Penelope, this heroine and her virtues do not appear straightforward or mainstream.

Lucretia and Penelope represent wives whose virtues lie within the domestic sphere. Artemesia and Zenobia, as queens, have a wider scope for their virtues. The former is here credited with 'Constantia' and 'pietas', and the constancy is certainly appropriate to the long and chaste widowhood for which she was particularly honoured. Boccaccio praised her as 'a woman of noble spirit and saintly love, and an eternal example of chaste widowhood for posterity', and Christine de Pisan commended her because 'she loued of so grete loue that it myght neuer departe from her herte'.⁴⁰ Artemesia's piety, however, is more difficult to pinpoint. Ruth Kelso has defined this quality as devotion to religion, demonstrated through hope, faith and patience in circumstances of affliction, and charity towards the poor.⁴¹ The writers who choose to present Artemesia's qualities do not seem to concentrate on these virtues. Instead, it is her role as a substitute for her late husband as soldier and governor, despite her gender, which is emphasised. Christine de Pisan summarises this as:

Her husbände lefte her many fayre and grete countrees in
gouernaunce yet to gouerne she neuer was abasshed / for strengthe
/ in vertue / sadnesse of condycyons / & prudence in gouernaunce
was all in her. So she had with that so grete hardynesse in dede of
knyghthode / & so well kepte the dyscyplyne of cheualrye that she

³⁹ Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p. 27.

⁴⁰ Boccaccio, *Concerning Famous Women*, p. 123; Pisan, *The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes*, part 1 chapter 25.

⁴¹ Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*, p. 26.

had the vycory of many dyvers bataylles. And thus the hyghnesse
of her name was gretely lyfte up by her grete praysynge.⁴²

With these qualities, Artemesia crosses from the traditionally female virtues to those of a male ruler. It is apparent that a contemporary would have expected Artemesia to represent a woman with the feminine virtues of constancy and chastity, as demonstrated by her behaviour as a widow, matched with the ability to transcend the gender stereotype and assume the role of a ruler when circumstances demanded it. There is a clear resemblance to the debate about women rulers and, by association, women who might govern the smaller worlds of their households and estates. However, the hanging does not offer this expected version of Artemesia. Her 'pietas' seems out of place and she might more comfortably have been accorded the 'fortitudo' and 'Justitia' here given to Cleopatra, or the 'prudencia' and 'sapientia' which the inventory – but not the physical panel – gives to the more domestic Penelope. Artemesia, therefore, is the third of the heroines to be given unexpected virtues in this set of hangings.

Zenobia shares many of the qualities of Artemesia as she too is a ruler who transcends the apparent gender stereotype. The 'magnanimitas' which she is accorded in the hanging, being the princely form of courage, includes both physical and moral courage and this is readily apparent in the military deeds for which she is apparelled here (illustration 54).⁴³ Her other virtue, 'prudencia', is a little less immediate but by no means difficult to identify. Christine de Pisan observes that when Zenobia was forced to assume the rule of her country she governed by 'grete wytte & dyscypline of knyghthode' and 'passed all other ladyes in noblesse and good condycyons of honest lyfe / and ryght soueraynely in

⁴² Pisan, *The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes*, part 1 chapter 25.

⁴³ Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*, p. 28.

all her demeanynge'.⁴⁴ Zenobia's political prudence, as demonstrated in her good government, is here made clear. She is also presented as a well-educated heroine with a desire for intellectual development in order to rule better, which is another form of prudence.⁴⁵ However, the most likely contemporary response to Zenobia would have been through knowledge of Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Defence of Good Women*, published in 1540. Here the two protagonists debate the moral nature of womankind and finally call upon Zenobia to appear as the embodiment of virtuous womanhood. She is praised for her 'nobylytye vertue and courage', as well as her education and her 'constance, and reason'.⁴⁶ Speaking for herself, Zenobia states that 'without prudence and constancy, women mought be broughte lyghtely into errour & foly, and made therefore unmete for that companye, whervnto they were ordeyned'. She speaks then of fidelity, obedience, fortitude and temperance, the greatest female virtue. All these essential qualities rely on prudence and constancy and 'prudencia' is the virtue which has been given to Zenobia alongside 'magnanimitas' on the Hardwick hangings.

The fifth hanging, Cleopatra with 'fortitudo' and 'Justitia', is the most perplexing. Cleopatra sits uneasily amongst a congregation of virtuous women and must surely have surprised contemporary viewers. The classical authors with whom they were familiar largely treated Cleopatra as contemptible and degenerate, and the only morals to be drawn from her life were negative.⁴⁷ Boccaccio continues the vilification in *De Claris Mulieribus*, describing the Egyptian Queen as 'known throughout the world for her greed, cruelty and

⁴⁴ Pisan, *The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes*, part 1 chapter 20.

⁴⁵ Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*, p. 29.

⁴⁶ Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Defence of Good Women* (London: [n. pub.], 1540), no pagination.

⁴⁷ Franklin M. Dickey, 'The Elizabethans' *Anthony and Cleopatra* in *Shakespeare: 'Anthony and Cleopatra': A Casebook*, ed. by John Russell Brown (London: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 144-157, (pp. 145-6).

lustfulness'.⁴⁸ Castiglione counts her amongst those women lost 'in giving themselves to pleasure, and satisfying all their lusts as much as they may'.⁴⁹ Spenser places her amongst those who 'Through wastfull Pride, and wanton Riotise', 'idle pompe, or wanton play' are

Condemned to that Dongeon mercilesse,

Where they should liue in woe, & die in wretchednesse.⁵⁰

Although the main thrust of opinion was that Cleopatra was in no way an example of a virtuous woman, there was a much smaller body of work which found some humanity in her great capacity for love. Thus Plutarch, whose *Lives* were translated by Sir Thomas North and published in English in 1579, found some nobility in Cleopatra's choice of death over ignominy, observing that it was well done and 'meete for a Princes discended from the race of so many noble kings', and that Caesar 'wondred at her noble minde and corage'.⁵¹ In *I Trionfi*, translated by Lord Morley in the 1530s and published in 1555, Petrarch could place her as a victor in the Triumphs of Love and Fame, and Chaucer could have her say with honesty, 'Was never unto her love a trewer quene'.⁵² However, none of these less censorious authors finds in Cleopatra a virtuous woman and yet the Hardwick hangings clearly place her in a category of women who exemplify specific virtues and who seem to serve as didactic moral exempla for the viewer.

⁴⁸ Boccaccio, *Concerning Famous Women*, p. 192.

⁴⁹ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. by Sir Thomas Hoby (London: J.M. Dent, 1928), p. 219.

⁵⁰ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by Thomas P. Roche (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1987), Book I, Canto V, Stanzas 46 and 51.

⁵¹ Plutarch, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes*, trans. Thomas North (London: [n. pub.], 1579), pp. 1009-10. North made his translation from the French version by Amyot.

⁵² Lord Morley's *Tryumphes of Fraunces Petrarcke: The First English Translation of the Trionfi*, ed. by D.D. Carnicelli (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), book I (p. 83) and book II (p. 139); *The Woorkes of Geffrey Chaucer* (London: [n. pub.], 1561), fol. 200^v. Francis Lee Utley, *The Crooked Rib* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1944) contains 'An Analytical Index to Poems and Prose Works in English and Scots which Relate to the Argument about Women' written before 1568, in which may be found a few more instances of Cleopatra's being treated gently because of her great ability for love.

Her quality of 'fortituto' may be related to the manner of her death but her 'Justitia', assuming that the inventory names it correctly, is more difficult to assign.

The inclusion of Cleopatra in this sequence renders the whole series of hangings obscure. The heroines and their virtues do not appear to come from any single well-known literary or, indeed, artistic source, which might provide a context for them.⁵³ The two obvious literary sources which do contain all five heroines, Boccaccio and Petrarch, do not present them all as virtuous women, the former offering the reader Cleopatra as an example of wickedness and the latter working in a different genre, where the presentation of virtue or its alternative, vice, is not in itself the main intention. Beyond the basic observation that women can be virtuous, the heroines do not appear as a whole group to enter into any of the contemporary debates about women, such as their need to be educated or their fitness for government. Nor do they seek to educate through the presentation of contrasts, examples of good and bad behaviours, from which to draw conclusions by comparison.

Do they, therefore, acquire a significance, intended or coincidental, in the context of Bess's own life? This question raises the issue of changing interpretations through the lifetime of the objects. The hangings were made in the early 1570s and were therefore presumably intended to be hung at Chatsworth. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to suggest the distribution of furnishings through that house or any sense of the iconographic strategy. The original contextual interpretation of these hangings is therefore lost. This study is concerned with their purpose in 1601, in a different house and nearly thirty years

⁵³ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 258.

later. The initial viewers of the hangings at Chatsworth would, if they had sought to make any connection with Bess's own life, have identified them with a much-married woman apparently content in her fourth marriage. Thirty years later at Hardwick, Bess was again a widow but the public playing out of the breakdown of her marriage to Talbot would have spoilt the illusion of contentment.⁵⁴ In the 1570s the virtuous wives, Penelope and Lucretia, might have seemed most applicable to Bess, whereas by 1601 the ruler heroines, forced by circumstance to adopt more masculine roles, might have come to the fore. These, however, are very loose comparisons. If the heroines can be identified with Bess, it is only because their virtues are so broad, general and flexible that they present a general pattern of the universal female, capable of being applied to almost any contemporary woman not actually sunk into moral depravity, which again raises the problematic spectre of Cleopatra, whom it is difficult to identify with Bess.

It has been noted by other authors that Bess appeared to have a particular devotion to Penelope and Lucretia, in the former case because she also owned a set of tapestries in which Penelope appears and a painting of *The Return of Ulysses to Penelope*, and in the latter case because she named her youngest daughter, who died young, Lucretia.⁵⁵ This does not, however, seem to be a strong argument. The tapestries are primarily concerned with Ulysses, and his wife, Penelope, merely appears in a brief supporting role. They are probably to be identified with hangings which were purchased for the sum of £180 or £200 from

⁵⁴ The breakdown of the marriage and the language in which Bess sought to project herself as a steadfast and dutiful wife are described in Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, chapters 7-9. A critical edition of the letters of Bess, Talbot and their peers during this period would be a welcome addition to the published material on Bess's life.

⁵⁵ For example, Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 258 and 290, and Holroyd, 'Embroidered Rhetoric', pp. 127 and 131-3.

Sir William Pickering.⁵⁶ As the tapestries were acquired second-hand from a member of Bess's social circle, it is likely that their subject matter was of less importance than their size, prestige, general appearance and especially availability, and that the purchase was a practical rather than an intellectual one. The painting, which is described in the 1601 inventory as 'Ulisses and Penelope', certainly does focus on Penelope and could have been commissioned specifically for its subject matter.⁵⁷ Anthony Wells-Cole has attributed it to John Balehouse, a painter employed by Bess, but the evidence for this is circumstantial and there is no clear information about the picture's provenance.⁵⁸ It is dated 1570 and probably, therefore, if it were already in Bess's possession, hung at Chatsworth but it is impossible to know whether it had any physical association with the hangings before 1601, by which time it was certainly being used in the same room, as if to emphasise the symbolism. The decision to name a child Lucretia cannot necessarily be laid entirely at Bess's charge. The discovery of the Northaw inventory, which not only predates the birth of Lucretia in 1557 but also Bess's marriage to Sir William Cavendish, shows that he already had two depictions of the classical heroine in his house before Bess arrived and interest in that heroine may therefore have been his as much as Bess's.

The other influential woman in the household in the 1570s was Mary, Queen of Scots, and it has been suggested that she may have been involved in the design of the hangings.⁵⁹ However, there is no real evidence for Mary's

⁵⁶ *HMC Salisbury*, III, p. 160, item 321. Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 23.

⁵⁷ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 47.

⁵⁸ *Dynasties*, p. 101.

⁵⁹ This assertion is frequently made, for example in Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 70. Holroyd, 'Embroidered Rhetoric', p. 111, makes the interesting observation that Mary had as a girl in France made a particular study of exemplary female historical figures. Holroyd strongly identifies Mary with the design of the hangings. For some contemporary French attitudes to Cleopatra see Jean Guillaume, 'Cleopatra Nova Pandora', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 80 (1972), 185-94.

involvement with this particular set of hangings, such as the personal devices, initials or symbols which appear on pieces with which she may be more firmly associated, and the suggestion that they were made in order to aggrandize the house she was about to occupy rather than with her participation may well be closer to the mark.⁶⁰ It is inevitably possible to draw parallels, albeit rather negative ones, between her life and the lives of the wives and widows on the hangings, but in the absence of any information about how the hangings were originally displayed this may very well be a merely romantic exercise, based on the enduring idealised myth of Mary rather than any contemporary preoccupation. If the hangings had been intended to be a moral lesson for Mary then it would have been a fairly harsh and mocking lesson, quite out of keeping with the care she usually received from Talbot.

It is perhaps possible that the hangings were intended to be part of a programme to praise but also to educate or remind a female ruler, this time Queen Elizabeth. Certainly there were important visitors who could relay descriptions of the house and its furnishings to the monarch if she so desired, but in the 1570s it would also not be far-fetched to hope that the Queen might one day visit Chatsworth herself – a possibility that is quite absent from Hardwick at the end of the century.⁶¹ However, other than in general terms of female virtue, the hangings have no particular relevance for Queen Elizabeth. The chosen heroines represent women as wives or widows but not as unmarried women. It could be suggested that by presenting a show of virtuous wives and widows the hangings form part of

⁶⁰ Pick, 'The Worthy Ladies of Hardwick Hall', p. 126. For examples of Mary's needlework see Swain, *The Needlework of Mary Queen of Scots*.

⁶¹ In 1580, Bess was writing to Mildred, Lady Burghley, to ask her assistance in encouraging the Queen to visit Chatsworth on progress, although Lord Burghley was quick to inform her that Elizabeth was not keen. Pauline Croft, 'Mildred, Lady Burghley: The Matriarch', in *Patronage, Culture and Power: The Early Cecils*, ed. by Pauline Croft (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 283-300 (p. 292).

the political programme encouraging the Queen to marry but this is surely to strain credulity, even if it can be noted that Elizabeth had not in 1573 yet acquired the iconic status of Virgin Queen.⁶² Bess and Talbot were not noted for their public advocacy of the Queen's marriage and, even if the hangings were to be seen in that context, whilst the images of virtuous wives and ruler-widows might be considered appropriate, Cleopatra is once again difficult to wind into the scheme.

Discussion of the hangings tends to assume that they have what may be described, in anachronistic words, as a feminist purpose, based on their depiction of exclusively female protagonists and their association with Bess. The desire to associate the hangings with Bess alone obscures many facts about them. The hangings were made in the 1570s at a time when Bess was, as far as may be known, a contented wife. Although the hangings undoubtedly depict women, they are also heavy with the visual imagery of a man, George Talbot. Despite Sophia Holroyd's assertion that 'The hangings blazon forth an identity that is primarily hers: the arms and crests are those of Hardwick, not Shrewsbury, relegating Shrewsbury's appearance in monogram to a function of Bess's identity, rather than the other way round', the balance is not in fact so distorted.⁶³ The Penelope panel, for example, prominently features his heraldic beast, the Talbot hound, the impaled arms of Talbot and Hardwick beneath his coronet, and the conjoined initials G, E and S for George and Elizabeth Shrewsbury. The Lucretia panel has Bess's arms and heraldic beast but still retains the entwined initials of her and her husband. In addition to the initials, the Zenobia panel has Talbot's cap of maintenance and the Talbot arms with multiple quarterings, a most definite

⁶² Susan Doran, 'Juno versus Diana: The Treatment of Elizabeth I's Marriage in Plays and Entertainments, 1561-1581', *The Historical Journal*, 38 (1995), 257-274 (pp. 270-4).

⁶³ Holroyd, 'Embroidered Rhetoric', p. 24.

affirmation of his family and lineage. The Artemesia panel has the multiply quartered Talbot arms impaling Hardwick, and Cavendish impaling Talbot, the latter an allusion to the marriage between Bess's eldest son and Talbot's daughter (illustration 55). The authority of the male is far from absent and serves as a reminder that the heroines are defined by their relationships with their husbands, as wives or widows. In the 1570s it would also serve as a reminder to the viewers that they were standing in the house of Bess and Talbot, not of Bess alone, and the values expressed by the architecture, furnishings and decorations of that place, whether concerning simple magnificence or more complex ideologies, were the projected ethics of the Earl and Countess together. By 1601, although Bess still proudly proclaimed the status that she had acquired through marriage to an Earl, the sense of shared ownership must have been much diminished.

Consideration of the hangings depicting virtuous women reaffirms that the series had a moral and didactic purpose, but closer analysis of the heroines and their virtues suggests that they can no longer be identified simply as a straightforward and predictable set whose meanings would have been immediately obvious and acceptable to all who saw them. Several of the heroines have been given virtues which do not traditionally belong to them and the inclusion of Cleopatra as a virtuous woman upsets the expected pattern and appears to be without justification. At one level the basic message of suitable womanly virtues has been conveyed strongly by simply naming the qualities and presenting them as words on the panels, making only a limited requirement to link them to the figures. Beyond that, however, the educated viewer could well have struggled to make a more involved interpretation. It is difficult to know whether this makes the iconography subtle and innovatory or weak and flawed, and the

failure to resolve this problem makes it impossible to judge whether the intellectual design was the work of a sophisticated mind or an intellectually limited one. It is clear, however, that whatever the problems of these depictions of heroines and their virtues, their general didactic purpose was the government of the self.

Amongst the other items which may be argued to support this theme are several cushion covers whose imagery is drawn from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Three have survived and these depict the fall of Phaeton, Europa and the Bull, and Actaeon and Diana (illustration 56). Amongst others known only from their inventory descriptions are cushions embroidered with the stories of Atalanta, and Venus and Cupid. Although there is nothing to indicate the exact nature of the stories used in these lost examples, it is reasonable to note that *Metamorphoses* contains tales which could fall under these headings.

Metamorphoses was a familiar text which was regularly treated as a source of moral and didactic inspiration. As a staple part of the curriculum in the grammar schools, where it was read as a model of literary style and as a source of information about ancient culture as well as a moral storybook, it was well-known to students and men of education as an annotated Latin text.⁶⁴ Its wider popularity was increased by the publication of Arthur Golding's English translation, which first appeared in 1565.⁶⁵ By his death in 1606 the translation had passed through seven editions and an eighth was published in 1612.⁶⁶ Given the popularity of *Metamorphoses* both in Latin and in the more accessible English translation, it is

⁶⁴ Ann Moss, *Latin Commentaries on Ovid from the Renaissance* (Signal Mountain, Tennessee: Summertown for the Library of Renaissance Humanism, 1998), p. xiii.

⁶⁵ The edition of 1565 contained just four books of Ovid's text. The edition of 1567 was the first to contain all fifteen.

⁶⁶ *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, trans. by Arthur Golding, ed. by Madeleine Forey (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2002), p. xxix.

reasonable to assume that contemporaries within Bess's social circle would have been extremely familiar with the material it contained, would have recognised visual references to the stories and could have interpreted them as they would have done the written word.

It has been suggested that 'the Elizabethan discovery of Ovid involved detaching the stories at least partly from the heavy weight of moralizing they had generally carried in the Middle Ages', but Golding is clear in his prefatory material that there are Christian morals to be drawn from the text and applied to contemporary readers.⁶⁷ In the dedication epistle to Robert Dudley which appeared in the 1565 edition Golding recommends the text 'for the number of excellent devices and fine inventions contrived in the same, purporting outwardly most pleasant tales and delectable histories, and fraughted inwardly with most pithy instructions and wholesome examples, and containing both ways most exquisite cunning and deep knowledge'.⁶⁸ It is clear that the literary text should be treated as a sourcebook of moral instruction and therefore it may be assumed that, by extension, pictorial references to the same work would be capable of interpretation in the same vein.

The Christian element of this morality is superficially more difficult to ascertain but Golding deals with this in the preface to the reader in the 1567 and later editions:

I would not wish the simple sort offended for to be

When in this book the heathen names of feigned gods they see.

The true and everliving God the paynims did not know,

⁶⁷ Laurence Lerner, 'Ovid and the Elizabethans' in *Ovid Renewed*, ed. by Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 121-135, (p. 121).

⁶⁸ *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, p. 3.

Which caused them the name of gods on creatures to bestow.⁶⁹

The worthlessness and moral vacuity of these heathen gods is revealed in the stories and thus the Christian God's purpose is revealed:

For God, perceiving man's perverse and wicked will to sin,

Did give him over to his lust to sink or swim therein.

By means whereof it came to pass (as in this book ye see)

That all their gods with whoredom, theft or murder blotted be.⁷⁰

The 'all' is an exaggeration as some of the gods do not err but those gods who are disgraced by the immorality of their actions serve as exemplars of vice condemned and punished. Furthermore, the gods and other beings described in *Metamorphoses*, who could otherwise be safely viewed through the distancing lens of ancient legend, are to be identified with the various estates of the contemporary world. Thus, 'By Jove and Juno understand all states of princely sort', or 'By Pluto such as delve in mines and ghosts of persons dead', and 'By Hecate, witches, conjurors and necromancers read'.⁷¹ At a less extreme level, even the 'satyrs, sylvans, nymphs and fauns' are to be identified with 'The plain and simple country folk that everywhere abide'.⁷² Everyone may find a connection with these stories for

Now when thou read'st of god or man, in stone, in beast or tree,

It is a mirror for thyself thine own estate to see.⁷³

'Estate' is used not only in the sense of social position, although it is clearly worse for the more aristocratic to fall from grace, but especially in the sense of moral worth or condition. Golding is repeatedly telling the reader – and indirectly the

⁶⁹ Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, p. 23, lines 1-4.

⁷⁰ Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, p. 24, lines 27-30.

⁷¹ Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, p. 24, lines 59, 71 and 73.

⁷² Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, p. 25, lines 75 and 76.

⁷³ Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, p. 25, lines 81-2.

viewer – of these tales to make comparisons with the contemporary world and to apply the same moral lessons but in the light of Christianity.

Golding does not annotate the entire text of *Metamorphoses* with moral points but assumes that the readers are able to draw their own conclusions. However, some stories are glossed as illustrative examples in the dedicatory epistle to Robert Dudley which first appeared in the 1567 edition. Two of these, the stories of Phaeton and Actaeon, coincide with tales depicted on two of the surviving embroidered cushion covers. The moral lessons to be drawn from the story of Phaeton are surprisingly broad and whilst they mostly relate to ways in which the individual may govern himself or herself there is also some relevance to the government of the nation.

In Phaeton's fable unto sight the poet doth express
The natures of ambition blind and youthful wilfullness,
The end whereof is misery, and bringeth at the last
Repentance when it is too late, that all redress is past;
And how the weakness and the want of wit in magistrate
Confoundeth both his commonweal and eke his own estate.
This fable also doth advise all parents, and all such
As bring up youth, to take good heed of cockering them too much.
It further doth commend the mean and willeth to beware
Of rash and hasty promises, which most pernicious are
And not to be performed. And in fine it plainly shows
What sorrow to the parents and to all the kindred grows
By disobedience of the child; and in the child is meant

The disobedient subject that against his prince is bent.⁷⁴

Few, it may be felt, could read that story without benefit. The interpretation of the story of Actaeon is briefer and more closely focussed on the faults of an individual.

All such as do in flattering frekes and hawks and hounds delight,
And dice and cards, and for to spend the time both day and night
In foul excess of chamberwork, or too much meat and drink,
Upon the piteous story of Actaeon ought to think.

For these and their adherents, used excessive, are indeed

The dogs that daily do devour their followers-on with speed.⁷⁵

Golding moralizes an example from each of the fifteen books of the *Metamorphoses* in this dedicatory epistle and makes other general moral comments but it is clear that the bulk of the moralizing must be done by the readers.

This instruction to the readers to do their own moralizing draws on the expectation that the stories and the habit of drawing morals are familiar to all. Golding's text has been discussed here because of the richness of its prefatory material and because of the likelihood that this would have been the text most familiar to Bess, a woman who is not known to have had an academic classical training. This is not to suggest, however, that the needlework pictures were directly or solely inspired by Golding's translation or were to be interpreted exclusively according to his precepts. An educated male viewer would doubtlessly have had a wider knowledge of the Latin moralized texts which were commonly used in the schools. Golding's is merely one voice amongst many but serves for

⁷⁴ Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, p. 7, lines 71-84.

⁷⁵ Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, pp. 7-8, lines 97-102.

illustration. The actual morals drawn by the viewers of the images on the cushions would have depended on their individual knowledge, experience and desire to become involved.

This discussion has assumed that the viewers were to interpret the visual images through their knowledge of the written word. Illustrated editions of *Metamorphoses* were widely available – although Golding was not illustrated – but there the viewer was asked only to compare image with accompanying text, rather than to undertake the more demanding task of using the image as an independent source of moral deduction. The sources for the Hardwick *Actaeon* and *Phaeton* cushions have not been identified but the *Europa* design was taken from an illustration in Virgilio Solis's Latin version of *Metamorphoses Ovidii* published in 1563, itself adapted from another illustration by Bernard Salomon.⁷⁶ Some viewers would have known these and other book illustrations but, although it has been observed that 'Renaissance editions of *Metamorphoses* were often printed with the designation "Bible of poets and painters" on the title page', there is little evidence that English patrons regularly chose it as a subject for imagery away from the printed text.⁷⁷ The inventories used for comparison in Chapter Three do not produce other examples of images from *Metamorphoses*, although it must immediately be noted that this could be a question of detail and language, as few inventories are overly concerned with subject matter. The royal inventories of 1547 add only two sets of tapestries which may be identified with the work, both depicting Meleager, one 'Table of nedleworke' with the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, and one painting of Orpheus and the beasts, although references to these

⁷⁶ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, pp. 51-2.

⁷⁷ *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, general editor A.C. Hamilton (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 677.

stories are not confined to Ovid amongst classical authors.⁷⁸ In paintings generally, the English interest in portraits and depictions of family and lineage militates against creative use of themes from the book. Plasterwork evades the eye of the inventory-taker and is therefore more difficult to comment on but there is a surviving overmantel of Orpheus at Haddon Hall and Bess herself made allusions to *Metamorphoses* in her plasterwork at Hardwick.⁷⁹ The paucity of pictorial borrowings from *Metamorphoses* in English art and decoration of this period, compared with the richness of its literary influence, proves that it had a textual rather than a visual familiarity.

It has been shown that *Metamorphoses* was a widely-known text, which would be appreciated for its moral as well as its linguistic lessons. Bess's use of it amongst her furnishings suggests an awareness of fashionable as well as intellectual interests and her particular choice of stories shows a concern for lessons of personal morality which could be interpreted by, and applied to, the individual as part of the government of the self.

Amongst the other items which display an interest in this theme, but which cannot be discussed here in great detail, are embroidered panels depicting the Liberal Arts, others showing small figures of virtues, and the overmantel of the 'lowe great Chamber'. There are eight panels of the Liberal Arts, the customary Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Astrology and Music being joined by Perspective and Architecture in place of the more traditional Geometry.⁸⁰ It is

⁷⁸ *The Inventory of King Henry VIII*, items 9019 (p. 181), 9731 (p. 209), 13656 (p. 340) and 10716 (p. 240).

⁷⁹ The Haddon overmantel is identified and illustrated in Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 25-6. Wells-Cole is able to give several examples where small details from illustrations of *Metamorphoses* have been borrowed for purposes other than reference to those stories, but this is not relevant to the current discussion.

⁸⁰ The physical appearance and construction of these panels are described in Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, pp. 65-6.

likely that an even number was required in order to create a balanced pattern within an overall design but the original disposition of the panels is unknown. Architecture has an obvious association with Bess's known interests and Perspective may be considered to be an associated art. The Liberal Arts may be allied with self-government in two ways. First, they demonstrate an interest in, or a desire to be associated with, education and scholarship, with cerebral rather than manual achievement, concerns which serve to improve the individual. Secondly, the skills and knowledge contained in the Liberal Arts allow for a proper understanding and proclamation of the Creation and God's authority and are therefore virtuous. With virtue lies government of the self's latent vice. The smaller panels depicting virtues are part of a mixed series of personifications, including virtues and vices, senses, figures from mythology, elements and abstract concepts such as Intelligence and Fortune. They are presented as women in classical dress standing under arches with their identities named above their heads. Of these, it is only the virtues and vices who specifically support the theme discussed here.

Most of the items illustrating the theme of the government of the self were placed in the state rooms on the second floor of Hardwick in 1601. The panels of Virtuous Women were in the 'with drawing Chamber', the cushions derived from *Metamorphoses* were spread between the 'Gallerie', 'best bed Chamber' and 'with drawing Chamber', the small panels of Virtues and other subjects were probably part of the best bed furnishings and the Liberal Arts were probably in the passage beyond the 'best bed Chamber'. It is clearly, therefore, primarily a theme intended to be admired and understood by Bess's peers. There is one exception to this principle but that exception is of an intriguingly different nature.

The overmantel in the 'lowe great Chamber' differs from the other exempla of this theme by its source, its location and its social purpose. All the items discussed so far have been drawn from classical sources, in subject matter, appearance or both. The last individual piece to be considered is the only one to be drawn from the Bible. The plasterwork overmantel in the 'lowe great Chamber' (illustration 57) consists of naked female figures supporting an elaborate strapwork cartouche surrounding the words, 'The conclusion of all things is to feare god and keepe the commaundements,' a text derived from Ecclesiastes 12. 13. This provides a simple, straightforward and overtly religious moral lesson by which the viewers are taught or reminded of their duty. The location of this didactic inscription, however, is interesting for it is placed in a room connected not with Bess's peers but with her upper servants. Whereas the more complex images provided for Bess's equals, being derived from classical sources, demand a higher level of education or cultural understanding, the overmantel's lesson requires only a familiarity with basic religion. The inscription provides a domestic equivalent of the *Homilies* which were expected to be read in Elizabethan churches. These were essentially a way of using religion to preserve the fabric of the political commonwealth by encouraging everyone to stay in the place to which God had appointed him or her. In keeping with the idea of society as a series of hierarchies held together by obligation and obedience, where the household could be portrayed as a microcosm of the state, Bess, the mistress of the house and the superior of those reading the message, could be seen as one link in the chain of authority which passed from her to the monarch before concluding in the ultimate authority of God. The instruction to obey God becomes, in microcosm, the instruction to obey Bess and this reminder has been left in the

heart of the servants' space by the absent authority figure, Bess, just as her heraldic identity commands the Hall downstairs and the Queen's identity presides over the 'high great Chamber' above. Essentially, the inferior is being taught to govern the self in order to keep to his or her degree. This suggests a difference more complex than mere educational level between the lessons offered to Bess's peers and to her inferiors. The lessons for the peers seem aimed at the individual, so that he or she may flourish through virtue. The lessons are associated with people who have achieved fame either through their good qualities, as in the heroines such as Penelope or Lucretia, or in their failings, as with Actaeon. The socially superior viewer is encouraged to seek individual attainment in the pattern of a named model. His or her inferiors, meanwhile, are not given individual models to emulate but share in a general injunction to all believers.

All these examples discussed here could have been interpreted by contemporaries as contributing to the theme of government of the self, a moral programme by which the individual could be strengthened by the acquisition of virtues and the rejection of vices. This process was directed to different social groups in different ways and the exercise of these virtues would be in a manner appropriate to the social degree of the viewer. Thus, the servants would demonstrate their acceptance by obedience and duty to the household, and the social superiors by their participation in improving and upholding the state. In this way, at the topmost end of society, the government of the self becomes, in the person of the monarch, the government of the nation.

Government of the Nation

Every individual person may be considered to have a duty of self-government but in the case of the monarch he or she must command not only the private virtues whose possession rejects vice and leads towards personal salvation, but also those greater virtues whose exercise leads to the proper government of the nation and the nation's prosperity and salvation. The depiction of good government in imagery serves several purposes: it celebrates the successful governor, it provides the standard to which the governor should aspire, it acts as a statement of the patron's loyalty to that ideal and, where the governor is considered to live up to that ideal, as a profession of loyalty by the patron to that good governor. Bess uses the theme of the government of the nation in these ways and by doing so praises her sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, and emphasises her own loyalty and devotion as a true subject. The theme may be explored by examination of three principal items, the plasterwork frieze of the 'high great Chamber', the appliqué hangings of Virtues and their Contraries, and the portrait of Queen Elizabeth herself.

The most extensive single feature illustrative of the theme of good government is the plasterwork frieze in the 'high great Chamber'. This frieze extends around the top of three walls of the room to a depth of approximately 3.35 metres.⁸¹ On the fourth wall, apart from some areas by the entry to the recess, it gives way to a narrower painted border above the windows. Within the recess the frieze reappears merely as two separate figures and there is no surviving decoration above the four windows of the bay. The building accounts reveal that the craftsmen in plaster were John Marcer and Richard Orton and it seems likely

⁸¹ The depth inevitably varies a little with the idiosyncrasies of the building but this figure will serve as an average. I am grateful to Andrew Barber of the National Trust for this information.

that there was also some input from Bess's chief plasterer, Abraham Smith, and that the colour could have been applied by John Balechouse.⁸² Marcer's and Orton's work was undertaken in 1595.

As previous commentators have observed, the frieze honours Queen Elizabeth. For David Bostwick, it is 'an allegory in celebration of the virgin Queen', in which 'through the just and virtuous rule of the pure virgin Queen Elizabeth, England reaps the harvest of prosperity'.⁸³ In similar vein, Anthony Wells-Cole comments that the plaster frieze 'glorifies Diana, here personifying Queen Elizabeth under whose just and virtuous rule the country had reaped prosperity for so many years'.⁸⁴ Whilst it is undoubtedly accurate to see in the frieze an overt celebration of the Queen and her good government, it is possible to arrive at this conclusion through arguments slightly different from those rehearsed by Bostwick and Wells-Cole.⁸⁵

The most important part of the frieze appears in the north wall opposite the entry to the 'high great Chamber' from the main stairs (illustration 58). For anyone approaching from the ceremonial route this would be the first image seen, immediately revealed and, because of its great height, unobscured by people or objects in front of it. The key figure is the goddess Diana, who is seated centrally (illustration 59). She is dressed in classical robes, the tunic a little military in its details, with an elaborate headdress above her flowing hair, and holds a bow idly in her left hand and an arrow, the point lowered, in her right. She is Diana the

⁸² Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 2*, pp. lxiv – lxvi, lxviii-lxx. Geoffrey Beard, *Decorative Plasterwork in Great Britain* (London: Phaidon, 1975), pp. 10, 13 and 17 gives some comments on the practical methods of this work.

⁸³ David Bostwick, 'Plaster Puzzle Decoded', *Country Life*, 184 (26 July 1990), 76-9 (pp. 78 and 79).

⁸⁴ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 269-70.

⁸⁵ The observation by Philip Yorke, Lord Hardwicke, in 1763, that there was 'a good deal of old Stucco in the State Room representing Hastings', may safely be discounted. Quoted in Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, p. 37.

huntress but her hunting implements are temporarily at rest. Seated amongst her standing court of nymphs she is in the place of honour and is a figure of authority rather than primitive action, engaged perhaps in serene contemplation of achievements rather than poised for further activity.

The association of Diana with Queen Elizabeth is a commonplace which would have needed no subtlety of learning or explanation for the social elite for whom the room's decoration was intended. In some imagery, both literary and visual, the Queen becomes identified with a goddess, Diana-Cynthia-Belphoebe-Astraea, who has multiple and yet closely related readings, whose attributes and qualities become diverse and complex. Bess, however, seems to offer her viewers the simplest guise of this multi-faceted goddess. As huntress, Diana is a symbol of the ruler's control and authority, a woman excelling within the traditionally male world of hunting, and a bringer of justice. Her chastity is inherent in the representation and obviously echoes the Queen herself but Bess has not made any overt reference to it. Nor is there any overt reference to Diana as goddess of the moon, sometimes known as Cynthia, such as a crescent moon in the figure's costume or even a moon as part of the landscape scene generally. As moon goddess, Diana had authority over the seas and could thus be associated with Elizabeth and England's sea power and nascent imperialism, but Bess's Diana is a land goddess not a maritime one. Bess chooses to represent a reasonably straightforward Diana figure to allegorise the Queen's strong government, but it must be noted that her simple offering might be seen and interpreted by others whose desire or ability to convolute and complicate the image could lead them into more involved explanations.

Diana sits amidst her court of nymphs, an obvious allusion to the Queen amongst the innermost circle of her ladies-in-waiting. They are placed before an oak and between two palm trees, traditionally the symbols of Diana's father and brother, although this seems of little relevance in this context; more trees spread away from them to form a forest, which is richly populated with flowers, birds and especially animals. Diana's immediate realm encompasses all these forms of natural life which are found, significantly, in harmony with each other. There is not, in the goddess's immediate vicinity, any strife, either between animals or between men and animals. Collectively the animals serve to illustrate harmony in the natural world. Individually, each is capable of a variety of interpretations but it seems probable that they represent the qualities which a good ruler should possess and are thus shown surrounding and supporting Diana. From Pliny the Elizabethans learnt that elephants 'understande their dueties and charges' and undertake certain tasks with 'prudence & equitie', and that the 'Lyon is ful of noblenesse & clemencie'.⁸⁶ Camels may signify obedience, oxen patience and stags prudence.⁸⁷ The stags are also a customary attribute of Diana and so complement her representation particularly but in this frieze they have another connotation which could not have escaped the original viewers. Throughout the house ample demonstration has been given that the stag is the heraldic beast of the Hardwick and Cavendish families, whether supporting the arms of Hardwick or appearing on the Cavendish arms themselves. The stags in the frieze therefore take on the secondary job of placing Bess and her family amongst Diana's court, in a gesture at once both loyal and presumptuous. Stags also appear on the south

⁸⁶ Pliny the Elder, *The Secrets and Wonders of the World*, trans. John Alday (London: [n. pub.] 1585), book 8, no pagination.

⁸⁷ James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, rev. edn (London: John Murray, 1992), pp. 56, 231 and 289.

wall, where they are in close proximity to a unicorn, a traditional attribute of the chaste virgin, whether Diana or Elizabeth.

The window recess to the west contains two figures who also represent classical goddesses. To the south is Ceres (illustration 60) and to the north Venus chastising Cupid (illustration 61). The latter figure conveys a message of pure love vanquishing worldly or carnal love, which could stand as a celebration of the Virgin Queen or simply as a message of chastity to all. However, Venus's chosen weapon of chastisement is a handful of flowers and around her head is a heavy coronet of flowers; other flowers grow up around the figures. Clearly, the goddess is also being used to depict Spring, with which Venus is particularly associated.⁸⁸ Ceres, on the opposite wall, is more obviously representing a season, Summer, with her cornucopia of fruits, her wheat sheaf and the scene of harvesting which takes place beside her. A third season is represented in the flat painting above the windows on the west wall, where there is a vigorous vine growing, richly hung with bunches of grapes, in the typical depiction of Autumn (illustration 62). The presence of three seasons, all richly abundant with their various fruits, makes it necessary either to find the fourth, Winter, or to account for its absence. There is no obvious depiction as easy to identify as the other seasons and so, for the moment, the search must be put to one side, to be reviewed later.

The south wall of the main part of the chamber carries the most dramatic incident in the frieze (illustration 63). It depicts a hunting scene involving several men engaged with an animal which may be either a bear or a boar in a wooded landscape with other animals approaching from one side but not directly involved in the fight. Anthony Wells-Cole has shown that the source for this part of the

⁸⁸ Hall, *Subjects and Symbols in Art*, p. 130.

frieze is a print depicting a bear hunt by Philips Galle after Johannes Stradanus from a book of hunting (illustration 64).⁸⁹ This has led to speculation that the scene should be read as a reference to the story of Callisto, one of Diana's chaste nymphs. Callisto was seduced by Jupiter and, when her pregnancy was discovered, was punished by Diana, who turned her into a bear and exposed her to the dangers of the hunting dogs. At the last moment she was saved from them by her erstwhile seducer, who translated her to the heavens, where she appeared as the constellation of the Bear.⁹⁰ The allusion is attractive because it appears to link the bear hunt with the figure of Diana on the opposite wall and shows Diana as the impartial ruler not afraid to enact justice, even on one of her own, which in turn celebrates Elizabeth as the just governor. As Bostwick writes, 'as Diana bestows her punishment on transgressors of her laws, so, likewise, Elizabeth allows no wrongdoer to escape her justice'.⁹¹ This beguiling interpretation is not, however, without problems. Although the classical story exists in several versions, the best known version for the Elizabethans would have been Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In that version, Diana merely dismisses the pregnant Callisto from her service, much as Elizabeth routinely dismissed her fallen Maids of Honour, and it is Juno, Jupiter's wronged and vengeful wife, who punishes Callisto by turning her into a bear. This version of the story does not, therefore, identify Diana as the bringer of justice. Furthermore, Callisto is never involved in a hunting scene of the fatal severity of that depicted in the frieze. Instead, one huntsman, Arcas, the son she bore to Jupiter, is stopped before he can strike her and the two are changed into

⁸⁹ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 270.

⁹⁰ Bostwick, 'Plaster Puzzle Decoded', p. 78; Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 270-1.

⁹¹ Bostwick, 'Plaster Puzzle Decoded', p. 78.

stars. The customary depictions of Callisto show her with Jupiter or at the moment of her discovery and metamorphosis, not as part of a hunting scene.⁹²

If there are some problems with the suggestion that this part of the frieze alludes to the story of Callisto, then there is another classical story with which the depiction also has resonance. The story of the Calydonian boar hunt is also to be found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In this, Diana sends a boar to ravage the land as a punishment because the people have neglected to show proper gratitude and duty to her for the country's prosperity and bounty at harvest time. Meleager and other hunters are sent to kill the boar, in which, after an exceedingly bloody fight, they are successful but many troubles befall Meleager and his family for their presumption in interfering with Diana's purpose. There are several attractions to seeing a reflection of this story in the frieze and one obvious problem. The boar is sent as a punishment to remind subjects that they should show proper gratitude and duty to their goddess-ruler, whose beneficence brings prosperity to their land. The figure of Diana presides over the kingdom of the frieze, which is rich in the imagery of plenty, whether it is corn, flowers, vines or animals. Diana is also Elizabeth and the viewer is reminded that this duty is appropriate not just from Calydonians to their deity but also from English subjects to their queen, whose good government brings bounty with it. The composition of the hunting scene in the frieze also owes much to the description of the Calydonian boar hunt, although it has been simplified to limit the number of figures to be depicted. The woodland setting, the boar's ferocity, the men hunting with spears, the dogs and, above all, the hunter trampled under foot by the beast, are all to be found in the story. At Cullen House, Banffshire, there is a similar depiction of a hunting scene, with the

⁹² Hall, *Subjects and Symbols in Art*, pp. 102-3.

same use of dogs, spears and a fallen hunter, albeit with the difference that the hunters are shown mounted on horseback, and this has been interpreted by Michael Bath and others as the Calydonian boar hunt (illustration 65).⁹³

The small problem affecting this otherwise attractive interpretation is the matter of the animal itself and whether it is a bear or a boar. Anatomically, there is not a great deal in it, although there are certainly no tusks on the creature in the frieze. The scene has been shown to have come from a source which is explicitly concerned with a bear and yet the composition of that source seems to draw heavily on the descriptions of the Calydonian boar hunt, especially in the figure of the fallen hunter about to be killed by the hunted animal. It seems appropriate to wonder whether Philips Galle, taking his design from Johannes Stradanus, is himself drawing on a tradition of the Calydonian boar hunt and has subverted that imagery to his particular purpose, just as Bess has copied details from his work and used them in the different context of her 'high great Chamber' frieze. It seems more likely that the original viewers of the frieze, had they wished to search for meanings below the immediate imagery, would have identified the general composition of this scene and connected it with the well-known story from Ovid, rather than Galle's hunting prints.

Two possible allusions to Ovid have been offered for this scene. However, it is also feasible that the intention was merely to represent hunting itself. It has been suggested that the imagery is reminiscent of the Calydonian boar hunt and Hall comments that this is 'sometimes used for paintings that are primarily woodland landscapes'.⁹⁴ Hunting is a conventional aristocratic activity of the countryside and in the well-governed and productive land the country would

⁹³ Michael Bath, *Renaissance Decorative Painting in Scotland* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland Publishing, 2003), pp. 211-2. Professor Bath does not offer a visual source for the design.

⁹⁴ Hall, *Subjects and Symbols in Art*, p. 207.

presumably be teeming with animals for the chase, which connects the scene with other images depicted in the frieze. Certain types of hunting, particularly the hunting of boars, are associated with the depths of winter and it is possible that this scene may provide the 'missing' season to complement the images of Spring, Summer and Autumn which are so clearly present in the frieze.

Landscape and general scenes of hunting, in part copied from the same sources, continue on the west wall of the 'high great Chamber' but they do not feature any specific incidents which might demand a detailed response from the viewer. The chief feature of the frieze on this wall is the break which occurs in the overall narrative in order to insert the royal arms above the fireplace (illustration 66). This is the room's other focal point. On entering the chamber the viewer is directed towards the figure of Diana on the north wall but once inside the room the fireplace and its decoration naturally draw the eye once the formality of reception is concluded. The royal arms, in an elaborate strapwork cartouche, are imposed on top of the landscape and the green ground continues behind it. The Queen's rose symbols rise out of brackets on either side of the strapwork so that they are held aloft and are not seen to grow naturally from the frieze's landscape and yet they create a sense of harmony between the symbol of royal authority and the surrounding natural landscape. Similarly, the heraldic supporters, whilst in a different style from the other animals in the frieze, do not seem alien or out of context, even though they have a quite definite purpose within the scheme. The Tudor royal motto, '*Dieu et mon Droit*', appears below the arms also contained within the cartouche, although Bess's entwined initials, 'ES', have been inserted

into the word '*et*'.⁹⁵ The appearance of the royal arms in the frieze emphasises that the scheme is dedicated to the Queen and Bess's loyalty to her. In some ways it is as much a symbolic reference to the Queen as the figure of Diana, since both images require interpretation and are not straightforward depictions of the Queen herself, but the heraldry is a much more conventional, uncomplicated reference than the allusion to the goddess, perhaps more to Bess's taste than the fanciful classical association. The royal arms in the frieze were echoed in 1601 by 'a looking glass paynted about with the armes of England' which was also placed in the 'high great Chamber'.⁹⁶ These royal arms certainly bring a sense of tradition and reinforce the reality of royal authority and Bess's pragmatic response to it. By the presence of the arms, even more so than by the presence of Diana, the Queen's role as the authority figure, aware of all and governing all even though physically absent, is firmly established.

The absent Queen presides over a country landscape. This is emphasised by consideration of the frieze in its architectural setting. The 'high great Chamber' has eight large windows and commands wide and far-reaching views of the countryside beyond the house and its immediate gardens. This is accentuated by the large window recess, in itself the size of a reasonable room, in which the occupant is projected forward of the line of the building almost into the landscape itself and is acutely aware of being surrounded by the outside world rather than being cocooned in the solidity of the building. The landscape, therefore, continues beyond the frieze and the real and the artificial worlds almost become mixed. This blending of the external and the internal must be intentional as it is too strong to be mere coincidence. It serves to highlight that just as Diana is the female

⁹⁵ It would be interesting to have it confirmed by paint analysis whether Bess's initials had always been in this position or were part of a later repainting.

⁹⁶ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 48.

governor of a prosperous mythical kingdom, so Elizabeth is the ruler of a real one and perhaps there would have been a little imagination left to carry the allusion through to its natural conclusion that Bess is the ruler of her immediate domain.⁹⁷

The countryside theme may possibly also have been continued in one of the sets of hangings for the room. The 1601 inventory reveals that there were two alternative sets of hangings for the chamber, one a set of tapestries showing the story of Ulysses, which cannot be shown to complement the theme of the frieze in anything other than a generically classical way, but the other a suite of woollen cloth 'stayned with frett and storie and silk flowers'.⁹⁸ These pieces have not survived but the mention of flowers is suggestive of a continuing landscape theme.

Some areas remain where the frieze cannot be minutely interpreted. However, it is clear that the imagery celebrates Diana's government of the mythical nation and thus Elizabeth's government of the real nation. In particular, it is the bounty and fecundity of the land which are brought to the fore, a prosperity which may only be enjoyed when there is good government. The seasons are particularly emphasised and it is a key concept of the period that they can only run in due order with their appropriate attributes when there is good government. The point is clearly illustrated in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where Titania makes a lengthy speech describing the confusion of nature's natural patterns which is occurring whilst she and Oberon, the rulers, are in dispute.

The spring, the summer,

The chiding autumn, angry winter, change

Their wonted liveries; and the mazéd world,

⁹⁷ A little imagination would certainly have been necessary to equate the reality of bad weather and failing crops in the 1590s with the theoretical world of the pastoral idyll.

⁹⁸ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 47.

By their increase, now knows not which is which.

And this same progeny of evils comes

From our debate, from our dissension:

We are their parents and original.⁹⁹

When harmony is restored between Titania and Oberon it may be assumed that harmony is also restored in nature.

By this theme the frieze may be connected with the imagery of Queen Elizabeth as Astraea, the returning goddess of the golden age. As described by Frances Yates, this imagery is immensely complex and it is suggested here that the frieze itself merely nods in the same direction rather than presenting a full interpretation of the Astraea theme in all its diversity.¹⁰⁰ The frieze does, however, have many echoes of Virgil's Fourth *Eclogue*, one of the pivotal Astraea texts used by the Elizabethans. In that eclogue the arrival of the great ruler allows the countryside to flourish again:

Now is the last age come whereof Sibyllas verse foretold,

And now the virgin come againe, and saturnes kingdome come

[...] And over all the world this golden age shall rise and spring.¹⁰¹

The returning virgin, who also has associations with Justice, was commonly taken as a reference to Elizabeth. The eclogue continues by foretelling that under this ruler 'the moneths great / Shall then begin forward to go and orderly proceed'.¹⁰² In this peaceful and harmonious world the earth will be plentiful and will give up its bounty lavishly, crops, fruits and flowers, the goats will offer their milk and

⁹⁹ *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, pp. 351-76, (p. 357, Act 2, Scene 1).

¹⁰⁰ Frances A. Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 29-87.

¹⁰¹ *The Bucoliks of Publius Virgilius Maro*, trans. by Abraham Fleming (London: [n. pub.], 1589), pp. 10-11.

¹⁰² *The Bucoliks of Publius Virgilius Maro*, p. 11.

there will be peace between all animals. When the ruler has fully understood the paths of virtue,

Then shall the feeld wax yellowish by little and by little,
With loft and tender eares of corne, and ruddie grapes shall hang
On thorne untrimd and wilde hard oakes shall sweat honny like
deaw.¹⁰³

There is a clear association between this pastoral world flourishing under the good ruler and the vision of Elizabeth's good government in the frieze.

Although the overall theme of the frieze is clear, there are still some problem areas. The precise meanings of the animals on the north wall are unresolved, as is the message of the fierce hunting scene on the opposite south wall. Three seasons are clearly depicted but the fourth, Winter, can only be tentatively assigned. If there are only meant to be three seasons in evidence, why should this be so? A world where Winter has been banished seems appropriate but does not quite fit the models. The Ovidian Golden Age has only one season, Spring, and in this Age the earth gives up its bounty without the need for human work. This is clearly not the scene depicted in the frieze. Once outside the perpetual Spring of the Golden Age, all seasons are necessary in order to bring a proper progression and so Winter must be present in the frieze somewhere.

Diana / Elizabeth is undoubtedly, however, presiding over these events as the good governor. Although Bess has chosen classical and literary allusions with which to celebrate her monarch, it is essentially a simple version of the imagery which could in other hands be rendered extremely complex. Bess's Queen is a figure of authority and power and there is little overt reference to Elizabeth's

¹⁰³ *The Bucoliks of Publius Virgilius Maro*, p. 11.

unchanging youth and beauty or her semi-iconic chastity, themes which were increasingly used to flatter and celebrate the aging monarch in the last decade of her reign.

The frieze, with its symbolism of Diana and the Golden Age, is very much a product of the last decade of Elizabeth's reign. The next items under consideration, the appliqué panels of the Virtues and their Contraries, although contemporary in manufacture, appear to hark back to an earlier period of the Queen's iconography.

The panels depicting the Virtues and their Contraries are described in the 1601 inventory as 'Seaven peeces of hanginges of imbroderie of Cloth of golde and silver, cloth of tyssue, velvett of sondry Coulers, and nedleworke twelve foote deepe, one peece with the picture of fayth and his contrarie Mahomet, an other peece with the picture of hope, and the contrary Judas, an other peece with the picture of temperaunce and the contrary Sardanapales, the other fowre peeces paned and wrought with flowers and slips of nedlework'.¹⁰⁴ At that time they were hung in the 'best bed Chamber', the innermost of the formal rooms on the second floor, to which formal access would be limited to the most important visitors. The Faith and Temperance panels survive and are now in glazed panels in the Hall, apparently a little diminished in height from the twelve feet mentioned in the inventory, but only fragments of the Hope panel survive in storage. The accompanying panels of flowers and needlework slips have not survived as recognisable complete pieces.

Other commentators have considered these panels alongside the panels of classical heroines and their virtues, discussed in the previous section, almost as if

¹⁰⁴ *Of Houshold Stuff*, p. 45.

they were meant to be read as parts of the same series.¹⁰⁵ The two sets do have obvious similarities in their size, their shared appliqué technique and their depiction of virtues. However, in an argument based on analysis of the fabrics used in the appliqué and on the dates of the costume depicted and the source material, Santina Levey has persuasively shown that the Virtues and their Contraries post-date the Heroines by around twenty years.¹⁰⁶ If these panels were indeed made in the 1590s they were made for Hardwick and may be considered to have an intentional part to play in the decorative scheme, unlike items which came to Hardwick from Chatsworth or other houses. It is here suggested that the Virtues panels are part of the celebration of the government of the nation by a good ruler.

The virtues of the classical heroines are those to which any person could aspire. At a basic level they also have relevance to a ruler, especially when the ruler is a woman, but the ruler also requires the stronger, God-given virtues whose authority upholds the Christian nation itself. In Aristotelian terms, it is the added virtue which gives the ruler his right to govern as well as his ability.¹⁰⁷ It therefore became a common practice to depict the Queen supported by the most formal and powerful virtues, the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, and the Cardinal Virtues of Temperance, Fortitude, Justice and Prudence. For example, the title page of the Bishops' Bible of 1568 shows the Queen between the figures of Charity and Faith and therefore depicts her in the role of the missing Theological Virtue, Hope (illustration 67).¹⁰⁸ The title page of the 1569 Bible has changed to show the Queen supported by female figures representing the Cardinal

¹⁰⁵ For example, Pick, 'The Worthy Ladies of Hardwick Hall', and Ellis, 'The Hardwick Wall-Hangings'.

¹⁰⁶ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, pp. 70-3.

¹⁰⁷ Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. by T. A. Sinclair, rev. by Trevor J. Saunders (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981), part III chapter xiii, pp. 209-16.

¹⁰⁸ Doran, 'Virginity, Divinity and Power', (p. 174).

Virtues, albeit with Mercy substituted for Temperance (illustration 68), and, as Roy Strong has noted, these 'Bible frontispieces depicting the Queen supported by the Virtues must have been seen by almost every subject'.¹⁰⁹ As an example of a less widely seen representation, the portrait of Queen Elizabeth commissioned by the Corporation of Dover in 1598 depicts her as the nation's governor in her parliament robes before a pillar decorated with medallions representing all seven virtues, emphasising that her good government is supported by these qualities (illustration 69). In each case the Queen by association becomes absorbed into the Virtues and identified with their powers.

The Hardwick panels present the Theological Virtues with the obvious difference that Temperance has been used instead of Charity. There are both ideological and practical possible reasons for this change. Lynn White has suggested that in the Middle Ages, following a reading of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, Temperance came to be identified with Charity and that by the late Middle Ages Temperance, Man's duty to know and rule himself, had become the most important of the seven virtues because by self-knowledge and self-control he might recognise, experience and enact the other virtues.¹¹⁰ In 1606 Barnabe Barnes was able to conclude that

Temperance is a vertue, than which nothing is more powerfull,
towards the repressing of affections, nothing more fit for the good
composition and confirmation of mens manners, nothing more
effectuall towards the attainment of Gods savour, that can either
be devised or spoken: and certainly, there is not any thing good in

¹⁰⁹ Strong, *Gloriana*, pp. 30-1.

¹¹⁰ Lynn White, 'The Iconography of *Temperantia* and the Virtuousness of Technology' in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Theodore K. Rabb and Jerrold E. Seigel (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 197-219 (pp. 205, 215, 219).

the whole course of mans life, which may not bee reduced unto

Temperance, as to the centre or spring of humane happinesse.¹¹¹

It is impossible to know whether Bess had any deep knowledge of this philosophy and the changing role of Temperance although, as will be shown in the next chapter, her books do seem to display an interest in religion. At a more practical level, it may simply be that the choice was governed by the availability of individual prints from the set of engravings from which the Hardwick panels were adapted. Anthony Wells-Cole has identified this as 'a rare series of prints of the Virtues engraved by Hans Collaert perhaps after designs by Crispijn van der Broeck in 1576'.¹¹² The original set of prints contained all seven virtues and Bess's decision to use only three may be based on lack of funds, lack of interest or lack of a complete set of source engravings. It is unclear, therefore, to what degree the substitution of Temperance for Charity is a distinct choice on Bess's part.¹¹³ The figures of Faith and Hope on the other panels are straightforward.

The Hardwick panels do not depict the Theological Virtues alone but in conjunction with their contrary vices, following an ancient tradition originally defined in the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius in the early fifth century. Bess's hangings must count as a rather late use of this theme and they are far removed from the violence of the conflict in much earlier depictions.¹¹⁴ In the two whole surviving panels, Sardanapalus and Mahomet crouch at low level in front of the

¹¹¹ Barnabe Barnes, *Four Bookes of Offices* (London: [n. pub.], 1601), p. 15.

¹¹² Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 258.

¹¹³ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 69, and others note that Bess's second, short-lived child, born in 1549, was called Temperance and deduce, therefore, an especial fondness for that virtue. This apparent devotion becomes less perfectly virtuous if it is remembered that the baby's godmother was Jane, Countess of Warwick, later the Duchess of Northumberland. The Warwicks themselves had a daughter called Temperance, who died in 1552 at the age of about seven, and it is surely possible that the Cavendishes' child was named as an act of flattery and alliance as much as an act of piety.

¹¹⁴ Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Mediaeval Art* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1964) discusses the origins of the theme and its developing iconography.

Virtues but there is no sign of battle or, indeed, of punishment or retribution upon the literally fallen enemy. There is also no sense of ongoing conflict, no sense of drama or uncertainty; the Virtues have undoubtedly won and are calm and even impassive in their victory. This is, of course, the only possible outcome since the panels depict the triumphant good government of Queen Elizabeth.

The importance of the triumph of virtue over vice in the execution of good government and its relevance to Queen Elizabeth were made clear in the pageants to mark her entry into the City of London before her coronation in January 1559. These consisted of five scenes in which the young monarch was both flattered and educated in her role as governor. The second pageant, which was enacted at Cornhill, was titled 'The Seate of worthie Governance' and featured 'a chylde representing her Majesties person, placed in a seate of governemente, supported by certayne vertues, which suppressed their contrarie vyces under their feete'.¹¹⁵ On this occasion, Pure Religion trod upon Superstition and Ignorance, Love of Subjects on Rebellion and Insolence, Wisdom on Folly and Vain Glory, and Justice on Adulation and Bribery. The staging was also covered with 'proper sentences' which emphasised the lesson that good government would be supported by virtues which would defeat vice and thus secure an 'everlasting continuance of quyetnes and peace'. Whilst Elizabeth ensured the proper victories of Virtue, her seat as the governor was assured. As Richard Tottill summarised in his account of the entry, 'The grounde of thys pageant was, that like as by Vertues (whych doe aboundantly appere in her Grace) the Quenes majestie was established in the seate of government; so she should sette fast in the same so long as she embraced Vertue and helde Vice under foote. For, if Vice once gotte

¹¹⁵ John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 2 vols (London: the author, 1788), I, irregular pagination.

up the head, it would put the seate of governement in peryll of falling.’¹¹⁶ Richard Grafton, who had been one of the organisers of the event, described this second pageant as ‘a seat Royall, supported by certain vertues, and her maiesty being placed in the said seat, suppressed all kynde of vyces which lay under her feete, which signified that the right office of a Prince was, and is to advaunce vertue and suppress vice’.¹¹⁷ The Queen, playing her part in the pageant, demonstrated her acceptance of this political theory and ‘most graciouslie promised her good endeavour for the maintenaunce of the sayde Vertues, and suppression of Vyses’.¹¹⁸ The close connection between the imagery of Virtues triumphing over Vices and Elizabeth’s good government is very clearly established.¹¹⁹

The Virtues and Vices chosen for the Hardwick hangings are different from those enacted in the pageants. However, the symbolism of the Coronation pageants and the association of the Queen with its message of Virtues defeating Vices was strong and remained in the public’s consciousness and viewers of the Hardwick panels must surely have made a connection with the lessons of 1559. Bess was almost certainly an eye-witness to the pageants and, if not, would undoubtedly have heard accounts directly from those who were there. It would also be a reasonable assumption that the aristocratic visitors for whom the hangings were intended, displayed as they were in the innermost part of the best rooms, would have a knowledge of the festivities, even if at a remove. Sydney Anglo has noted that the scheme of Virtues and Vices, although commonplace in itself, was used for the first time in English pageantry on this occasion, which may

¹¹⁶ Nichols, *Progresses*, I, irregular pagination.

¹¹⁷ Richard Grafton, *Abridgement of the Chronicles of England*, 2nd edn (London: [n. pub.], 1572), fol. 195^r.

¹¹⁸ Nichols, *Progresses*, I, irregular pagination.

¹¹⁹ The entry is discussed with further references in Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), chapter 10.

have helped to strengthen the connection between the coronation entry and the theme.¹²⁰ He also demonstrates that the pageants were intended to give pointed lessons about contemporary politics and religion and it is possible to suggest that this intention was matched but updated in the Hardwick panels. If this is so, the hangings of the Virtues and their Contraries reveal that Bess laid a complex interpretation of a traditional theme before her visitors.

The two surviving panels can be analysed for the messages which they would have conveyed to contemporary viewers. The panel of Faith and Mahomet carries the clearer topical and political message (illustration 70). At first sight, Christianity has vanquished Islam and in the 1590s, following the Christian victory over the Ottoman Turks at the battle of Lepanto in 1571 and the subsequent easing of military activity in the Mediterranean, this could almost seem a reasonable conclusion. However, the figure of Mahomet in the hanging is surely an allusion to Catholicism and the figure of Faith is the figure of triumphant Protestantism, a much closer and more immediate matter in England. The figure of Faith has been significantly altered from the source engraving and one of these changes has been to bring the book into greater prominence (illustration 71). Whereas books are to be seen on the seat behind Faith in the source, in the hanging one book, and one alone, clearly labelled in English 'Faith', is held firmly in the figure's right hand and is therefore emphatically one of the weapons of her victory, alongside a chalice and a cross, the latter also moved to a more prominent position in relation to the figure of Faith. Emphasis on the Truth as revealed in the Bible, the word of God, was the most important part of the

¹²⁰ Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy*, p. 355. He also notes that the theme had been used in 1503 at the entrance of Margaret Tudor into Edinburgh. On that occasion Justice trampled Nero, Force overcame Holofernes, Temperance defeated Epicurus and, of interest here, Prudence vanquished Sardanapalus. It is not to be suggested that popular memory carried this 1503 spectacle to the minds of viewers of the Hardwick hangings in the 1590s.

imagery surrounding Elizabeth as a Protestant ruler.¹²¹ For example, the presentation of an English Bible to the Queen had been an important part of the pageants to celebrate her entry into London before her coronation, when it was delivered to her by the figure of Truth, the daughter of Time. The Queen, 'as soone as she had receyved the booke, kissed it, and with both her handes held up the same, and so laid it upon her brest, with great thanks to the citie therfore'.¹²² Through the ensuing years up to the creation of the hangings in the 1590s Catholicism had posed a considerable threat to Elizabeth and to the stability of the country, both from internal and external enemies, but the reformed religion and the independent nation had survived. Of particular piquancy in Bess's household, the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, had lessened the Catholic threat from one particular direction and naval victory over Spain in 1588, even though it did not bring peace and was, indeed, followed by an even greater Spanish threat in the early 1590s, brought another symbolic victory for Protestantism over Catholicism. The exoticism of the turbaned Muslims in Turkish costume may be easily read as conveying the 'difference' or 'otherness' of Catholics and this dual identity is emphasised, perhaps accidentally, by the Gothic architecture of the building in the background inhabited by the groups of Muslims and the presence of angels holding a canopy over a small central figure in an arch.¹²³

The panel of Temperance and Sardanapalus also has a multi-level message, giving an immediate superficial lesson about virtue and vice, and then

¹²¹ The depiction of Elizabeth as Protestant ruler in the early part of her reign and the subsequent replacement of this iconography by imagery connected with her marriageability and then inviolate virginity is discussed in Doran, 'Virginity, Divinity and Power', pp. 171-99.

¹²² Nichols, *Progresses*, I, irregular pagination.

¹²³ The original design for this part of the hanging has not been identified, which leaves some interesting questions unanswered. Anthony Wells-Cole (p. 258) refers to a 'Moorish-style building' but the architecture appears rather to be a hybrid mix of Gothic, in the pendant ceiling, the two-centred arch of the door and especially in the tracery of the two church-style windows, and the classically-inspired details of the columns, entablature and arcading.

leading the viewer into a topical allusion (illustration 72). Sardanapalus is a standard example of a monarch whose vices lead to his eventual downfall and he may be used to exemplify various forms of intemperance, including luxury, debauchery and effeminacy. Sir Thomas Elyot, in *The Boke Named The Governour*, uses him as an illustration of the vice of idleness in the following way:

But who abhorreth nat the historie of Serdanapalus, kyng of the same realme [Persia]? whiche hauynge in detestation all princely affaires, and leuyng all company of men, enclosed hym selfe in chambers with a great multitude of concubynes: And for that he wolde seme to be some time occupied, or els that wanton pleasures & quietnesse became to hym tediousse, he was founde by one of his lordes in a womans atyre spinnyng in a distafe amonge persones defamed: whiche knowen abrode, was to the people so odiousse, that finally by them he was burned, with all the place wherto he fledde for his refuge.¹²⁴

Just as Sardanapalus is a bad ruler, his contrary, Temperance, must by implication herself be a ruler and thus the association with Queen Elizabeth is a simple step. This identification with royalty appears to have been emphasised in the differences between the source engraving and the Hardwick hanging. In Collaert's original engraving, the foreground Sardanapalus is dressed in a classical style and is bare-headed (illustration 73). The hanging retains the classical costume – with the addition of a neat contemporary shirt – but significant alterations have been

¹²⁴ Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named The Governour*, (London: [n. pub.], 1535), fols 95-95^v.

made to the king's head.¹²⁵ Sardanapalus's head has now been remodelled to resemble that of a contemporary flamboyant courtier, with tightly curled hair and shapely beard and moustache. In his hair he wears flowers, pearls and jewels and, most significantly, a pearl-encrusted crown, emphasising the figure's kingly status. The fashion of the head is quite French and also has great similarities with some of Hilliard's miniatures of the 1580s, especially that of Sir Walter Raleigh (National Portrait Gallery 4610), which form a group in which Roy Strong considers the artist seems 'sometimes to be depicting *mignons* of the court of Henri III rather than Elizabethan courtiers'.¹²⁶ It begins to seem that the Temperance panel may not be so general as originally thought and could have suggested a particular scenario to contemporary viewers, just as Faith and Mahomet could be translated into Protestantism and Catholicism. An original viewer would have seen in the appliqué figure of Sardanapalus a king, styled in the French manner, known for his intemperate luxurious living, debauchery and effeminacy (the figure holds a bobbin and distaff, even if he is not attired in women's clothing as Elyot describes), ultimately murdered by his own subjects. If Santina Levey is correct and the panel does indeed date from the 1590s, a contemporary might well be moved to remember Henri III of France, who was assassinated in 1589, and to contrast the intemperance and instability of his Catholic reign with the apparent temperance and stability of Elizabeth Tudor's Protestant rule.¹²⁷ This panel too is revealed as having a potential secondary and

¹²⁵ One other example of changes to the clothing is in the inset orgy scene, where the naked or lightly draped figures of the original have been dressed in contemporary costume.

¹²⁶ Roy Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983), p. 93.

¹²⁷ Keith Cameron, *Henri III: A Maligned or Malignant King? (Aspects of the Satirical Iconography of Henri de Valois)* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1978), p. 31, shows that Henri III was likened to Sardanapalus, amongst other standard examples of Vice, by his own countrymen.

more sophisticated meaning to which contemporary viewers could have responded.¹²⁸

The hangings of the Virtues and their Contrary Vices are an interesting mixture of contemporary politics and a slightly outmoded theme. Unlike the frieze, which makes some attempt to reflect royal iconography of the 1590s, the images of Virtue and Vice on the hangings look back to the iconography of the first half of the Queen's reign. Although the hangings may be seen as celebrating the Queen's achievements, the tone is less exuberant than in the frieze and more didactic, as if reminding the Queen of her duty to rule by Virtue and to trample Vice underfoot, and the dire consequences of failing to do so.

The most straightforward images of government in Hardwick would have been the portraits of the Queen herself. There were originally four, dispersed between the 'high great Chamber', 'Gallerie' (2) and 'low great Chamber', but only one has survived. The surviving portrait was probably the grandest of the four and it is likely that it was in the 'Gallerie' (illustration 74). This assumption, which is not in the end capable of proof, is drawn partly from its size, which would require a large space to do it justice, but also partly from the description of the second picture of Elizabeth in that room as being 'in a less table', which implies a greater size in the other picture.¹²⁹ Bess's acquisition of the painting has already been discussed in the previous chapter.

The painting, which dates from the 1590s, is attributed to Nicholas Hilliard or his workshop and Roy Strong has suggested that it is derived from a

¹²⁸ It is interesting to note that Bess had been given a detailed account of the murder of Henri III. This and other letters show that Bess had a keen awareness of both national and international news. Daybell, '“Suche newes as on the Quenes hye wayes we have mett”', p. 127.

¹²⁹ *Of Household Stuff*, p. 49.

woodcut by or after Hilliard (illustration 75).¹³⁰ The head and shoulders are identical but in the painting the pose has been extended to full-length and the sitter has been placed within a setting containing a wall-hanging, a carpet and a chair. The costume, the artefacts and the positioning of the hands have been changed. Elizabeth's standing pose, depicted at full-length, is unusual for her and is reminiscent of the 'Ditchley' portrait.¹³¹ It is also emphatically the pose of a ruler, powerful, unyielding and assertive, and makes no concessions to her gender. The pose also allows the chair, with all its imagery, to be prominent and not half-hidden by a seated figure. This enlargement of the figure and the creation of a setting allow a greater use of symbols to create an iconographic message.

Unlike many of the Queen's later portraits, such as the 'Ditchley' portrait, 'Rainbow' portrait or 'Procession' portrait, the image does not appear to have symbolism linking it to its patron. There do not seem to be any heraldic or emblematic links to connect the picture with Bess or any references to shared moments of contact between subject and monarch. It has been suggested that the portrait was commissioned to commemorate a gift of an embroidered underskirt from Bess to the Queen – and the underskirt certainly demands the viewer's attention – but this suggestion is open to question.¹³² There are several references to Bess's gifts of embroidered clothing but there is no surviving description which matches the underskirt shown here.¹³³ Although the inventories of Queen Elizabeth's clothes list many elaborate and fantastic garments, the 1600 inventory,

¹³⁰ Strong, *Gloriana*, p. 150. The dating of the painting to 1599 is based on the record in the household accounts described in Chapter Three.

¹³¹ Although there are other portraits in which the Queen is obviously standing, they are three-quarter length not full-length. The disposition of Elizabeth's hands is also very similar in both paintings, although the props she holds are different.

¹³² The most detailed presentation of this idea is Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Leeds: Maney, 1988), pp. 77-80.

¹³³ Some of the gifts are listed in Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, pp. 91-2. The process by which Bess took advice on her gifts is described in Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, pp. 94-6.

which might be supposed to contain this item, does not list it.¹³⁴ Furthermore, as Santana Levey observes, 'it is also more likely that the Queen is shown wearing a stained or painted petticoat, rather than an embroidered one'.¹³⁵ This seems more likely for several reasons. First, there are no stitches visible on the underskirt although the artist was certainly capable of depicting embroidery, as may be seen on the treatment of the chair and cushions. Secondly, the sheen of the underskirt's silk ground continues through and over the depictions without any apparent break in the surface, and, thirdly, in their fluidity and naturalism the motifs do not resemble the more stylised and unyielding needlework slips. There are no records of Bess's giving the Queen gifts of garments decorated with a painted or stained technique. The costume is surely, above all, an artist's conceit and no artist is as fascinated by the intricacies and possibilities of painting costume as Hilliard.

The picture is dominated by the colours red, black and white. Red is a royal, princely colour, a colour of power and authority. Gerard Legh, in his *The Accedens of Armory*, a book on heraldry which also became one of the manuals of colour symbolism, noted that, in its heraldic form, *gules*, red 'longe hath ben used of Emperours and kyngs, for an Apparell of maiestie'.¹³⁶ Moreover, it 'betokeneth strength'.¹³⁷ Red was also associated with blood and thus, through the blood of Christ, with justice and mercy, two qualities particularly associated with good government.¹³⁸ In the Hardwick portrait a deep crimson red is used for the velvet of the hanging behind the Queen and for the chair, so that she is surrounded by a

¹³⁴ That is if the picture is indeed dateable to 1599, a premise questioned in Chapter Three. Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, pp. 335-50, provides the inventory for July 1600, edited from manuscripts in the British Library, Public Record Office and Folger Shakespeare Library.

¹³⁵ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 36, n. 68.

¹³⁶ Gerard Legh, *The Accedens of Armory* (London: [n. pub.], 1562), fol. 10.

¹³⁷ Legh, *The Accedens of Armory*, fol. 11.

¹³⁸ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, p. 90.

colour resonant with her royal power and majesty.¹³⁹ The use of crimson velvet is also suggestive of the Queen's parliament robes, in which she was often depicted, and their association with her authority's being supported by the goodwill of the commonweal.¹⁴⁰ Black and white are generally recognised as the Queen's colours, an assertion she herself made to the Spanish ambassador in 1564.¹⁴¹ She and her courtiers are often portrayed in black and white, the colours being used either separately or together, and the black is generally interpreted as constancy and the white as purity.¹⁴² The idea of chastity is perpetuated in the pearls with which the Queen's clothes are copiously decorated. However, it is here suggested that this portrait is not overly concerned with the presentation of Elizabeth as Virgin Queen but instead is more concerned with the depiction of power, authority, dynasty and fame.

The idea of royal authority, so richly established in the crimson velvet of the background, extends into the chair against which the Queen is leaning (illustration 76). The chair, which is also covered in crimson velvet, is a chair of state, effectively a throne for the Queen, and her standing pose giving a full view of the chair emphasises its importance in the painting. At the top it is decorated with an heraldic lion wearing an imperial crown in imitation of the supporter of

¹³⁹ Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature*, pp. 111 and 115, notes that Hilliard had adopted the crimson velvet curtain with its deep folds as a background in 1594 and had made repeated use of it afterwards. Strong observes that 'such curtains are a resurrection from Eworth's portraits of Mary Tudor in the middle of the century' but fails to make a comparison with the curtain in the background of *The Family of Henry VIII: An Allegory of the Tudor Succession*, attributed to Lucas de Heere, c. 1572 (illustrated in *Dynasties*, p. 81). In that painting the crimson velvet curtain has a gold embroidered border very similar to that in the Hardwick portrait of Queen Elizabeth.

¹⁴⁰ The Queen's parliament robes are discussed and illustrated in Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, pp. 58-64.

¹⁴¹ *Calendar of Letters and Papers Relating to English Affairs, Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas*, ed. by Martin S. Hume, 4 vols (London: HMSO, 1892-99; repr. Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1971), I (1892), p. 368.

¹⁴² Grant McCracken, 'Dress Colour at the Court of Elizabeth I: An Essay in Historical Anthropology', *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 22 (1985), 515-33, presents another interpretation of the court's preoccupation with black and white clothing, in which it is associated with youth and age and the attributes of each.

the royal arms, another symbol of Elizabeth's royal authority and rights. The crown itself is similar to the State Crown which was part of her royal regalia.¹⁴³ The crown is then repeated as part of the embroidered decoration on the back of the chair. The motif is formed from three Tudor double roses and the crown, again very close to the design of the State Crown, floats above the largest, central rose. The Queen's initials, 'ER', are worked on the upper cushion lying on the chair and the arms of England, with their inherent assertion of rights over France, are on the frame of the chair below the seat.¹⁴⁴ The use of initials to identify the Queen in this picture appears to be unique amongst full portraits of her. Given the wealth of other imagery to project the role of the sitter, the use of the initials 'ER' seems redundant, even naïve. The naïvety is emphasised by the way in which the letters, in themselves fine and decorative, are placed rigidly in the upright plane of the picture's surface with little attempt to integrate them into the folds and creases of the velvet cushion on which they are nominally embroidered, even though the trailing cords which seem to be part of the motif are depicted as laid onto the velvet fabric and are thereby affected by the cushion's three-dimensional representation. The Queen needs no such simplistic identification and it is possible to wonder whether this is one intrusion of Bess's taste for the straightforward and obvious, similar to her own 'ES' monogram with which she stamped her identity on so many of her possessions. Even if the initials are unnecessary, they do reinforce the sitter's role, just as everything on the chair

¹⁴³ The State Crown, lost during the Commonwealth, is described and illustrated in Roy Strong, *Lost Treasures of Britain* (London: Viking, 1990), pp. 120-22.

¹⁴⁴ It may well be coincidence but the initials are very similar to the initials in a design for a jewel by Hans Holbein the Younger over half a century earlier, although there the letters are entwined and it is necessary to unknot them in order to see the points of similarity. The Holbein jewel is illustrated in Diana Scarisbrick, *Tudor and Jacobean Jewellery* (London: Tate Publishing, 1995), p. 35.

emphasises the Queen's monarchy, her identification with England, with the Tudor dynasty and her imperial aspirations.¹⁴⁵

In the Queen's right hand is a pair of gloves, a traditional love token, and she places the hand holding the gloves on the chair which represents England, in a gesture of loyalty and love towards her country. Gloves are also part of the coronation regalia, as is a ring, and it is noticeable that the Queen is pictured wearing only one ring and that is on the hand holding the gloves and touching the chair of state which represents England. Her other hand, which holds a fan, is quite markedly and, indeed, blatantly naked of any jewels, as if to draw attention to the one ring. The whole chair and Elizabeth's point of contact with it are therefore conjuring the spirit of the Queen's coronation, the critical moment at which her earthly power was wedded to her anointed and divinely appointed state.

The allusions to Queen Elizabeth's power and lineage continue around her head and shoulders (illustration 77a). She wears a closed crown of the imperial type, although of an obviously very stylised and ornamental design, constructed entirely of pearls, her symbol of purity. In her hair are two roses and another is fastened to her elaborate lace ruff. Although these roses are not the formulaic heraldic Tudor rose with its symbolism of the union of the houses of York and Lancaster, they are widely used in representations of the Queen and may still be read as emblems of her family. Although roses have overtones of the Virgin Mary, chastity and, possibly perversely, love and marriageability, and had been used in these ways in connection with Elizabeth, Susan Doran notes that 'the ubiquitous rose in Elizabethan portraiture usually alludes to the Tudor dynasty'

¹⁴⁵ The original frame for this picture is lost. It may have reinforced the imagery of the picture. The current frame, commissioned by the 6th Duke of Devonshire in the early nineteenth century, has no such imagery, being simply egg and dart mouldings of a style used by him throughout his collection.

and that 'whenever the rose was directly applied to Elizabeth in poetry, it usually referred to her dynasty not her virginity, and there is every reason to think that the same is true in pictures.'¹⁴⁶ The motif had appeared many times on portraits of other members of the family and on their coinage. Any contemporary viewer of the painting, whilst accepting the symbolism of dynasty, would undoubtedly also have read into the roses the symbolism of love and chastity. In this way they could then be drawn into an interpretation based not only on the sitter's personal condition as Virgin Queen but also on the Queen's chaste love of her nation, England, so strongly represented in the symbolism of the chair of state.

Many portraits of the Queen feature magnificent pieces of jewellery with symbolic meanings. Whilst the 'Phoenix' and 'Pelican' portraits of Elizabeth are interpreted almost wholly on the basis of their particular jewels, the jewel in the Hardwick portrait is not widely celebrated and yet it plays an important part in the overall iconographic scheme of the painting (illustration 77b). It consists of diamonds in a gold setting with three pendant pearls attached to the Queen's skirt. Against a background of similarly sized motifs, the eye is drawn to it because of the bright red ribbon by which it is suspended from the point of Elizabeth's bodice and the red ribbon tied in a bow which appears to hold it in place, presumably disguising a pin of some sort. Although the ribbon is a more scarlet colour than the crimson of the chair and backcloth, its red colour is a link with their symbolism of power and majesty. Despite the whole expanse of skirt on which it could be displayed, the jewel is fixed as close as possible to the chair of state, as if to associate the jewel firmly with its meaning. The upper part of the jewel is shaped like an obelisk, a symbol of eternity. On each side of the obelisk is a

¹⁴⁶ Doran, 'Virginity, Divinity and Power', pp. 177-8 and notes.

winged figure, probably representing Fame, dressed in classical drapes and blowing a trumpet.¹⁴⁷ The Queen's fame, based on the attributes praised in the painting, is to be proclaimed forever, a conceit in which the painting is both the medium and the message.

The most arresting part of the composition is the Queen's elaborately decorated underskirt (illustration 77c). It is covered in sea monsters, plants, and birds and butterflies. At the simplest level this represents things of the water, things of the land and things of the air and it is an easy, direct and appropriate conclusion that the Queen's power, so firmly emphasised by the picture's royal imagery, extends over land, sea and air. This sits well with contemporary interest in England's sea power and nascent imperialism expressed most clearly in the imagery of the 'Armada' portrait, where scenes of naval conflict are depicted in the background, an imperial crown is prominent to one side and the Queen's hand rests on a globe, her fingers poised over the Americas.¹⁴⁸ The happy profusion of nature depicted on the underskirt seems also gently to touch upon the imagery of Elizabeth as Astraea, 'the bearer of the springtime *renovatio* of the golden age'.¹⁴⁹

Whether the contemporary viewer chose to extend the interpretation of the motifs on the underskirt depended ultimately on his or her sophistication and willingness to engage.¹⁵⁰ Many of the images and their allegorical resonances would be familiar to contemporaries and it would ultimately be up to each of them to decide where to stop deciphering the code. A few examples illustrate the

¹⁴⁷ Scarisbrick, *Tudor and Jacobean Jewellery*, p. 58, identifies the figures as Fame, presumably repeated for the sake of symmetry.

¹⁴⁸ *Dynasties*, p. 88; Strong, *Gloriana*, pp. 131-3.

¹⁴⁹ Strong, *Gloriana*, p. 160.

¹⁵⁰ The modern viewer must decide whether to take the approach favoured by Roy Strong and seek to interpret minutiae, or the approach advocated by Sydney Anglo, who states that 'images which require pages of exegesis before they yield up their meaning do not make for successful propaganda'. Sydney Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship* (London: Seaby, 1992), p. 130.

possible elaborations. The lilies and irises were, through their earlier association with the Virgin Mary, widely accepted as symbols of the Queen's virginity. The two serpents may be thought of as indicative of wisdom and associated with prudence, just as they are in the later 'Rainbow' portrait of the Queen.¹⁵¹ The kingfisher is connected with the halcyon days, a period in which the sea is calmed, and so perhaps with the theme of power over the elements. The pomegranate has associations with fecundity and with Proserpine, 'who returned every spring to regenerate the earth', just as the Queen's good rule brings fecundity, renewal and constant Spring to the nation.¹⁵² The roses may be another allusion to the Tudor dynasty. Perhaps the iris, so prominently displayed in the centre of the skirt's bottom hem, is representative not only of the Queen's chastity but also, through its association with the rainbow, with her ability to bring peace to calm the elements. All these familiar motifs would therefore have reinforced to the contemporary viewer the themes of authority, power, strong rule and dynastic right, themes already established in the other parts of the portrait.

How a contemporary would have interpreted the ostrich is less clear. As Janet Arnold has noted, this ostrich appears to be based on an ostrich to be found in the emblem book of Paradin, later copied by Whitney, although the direction in which it holds its head has been altered in the Hardwick portrait (illustration 78).¹⁵³ In the emblem books the ostrich is a symbol of hypocrisy and vainglory, hardly an obvious motif with which to celebrate the monarch, but perhaps interpretable as a lesson to the Queen to avoid such qualities either in herself or others. The question therefore arises whether the artist intended the viewer to

¹⁵¹ Strong, *Gloriana*, p. 159.

¹⁵² Hall, *Subjects and Symbols in Art*, p. 249.

¹⁵³ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, p. 80. Claude Paradin, *Devises Heroïques* (Lyons, 1557; repr. Menston: Scolar Press, 1971), p. 49; Geoffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes* (Leyden, 1586; repr. Menston: Scolar Press, 1969), p. 51.

make such a detailed interpretation of the skirt or sought to make a simple statement and chose to do so using illustrations which came readily to hand. An emblem book is as much a source for a design as it is a source for a meaning but an elite audience which was familiar with the imagery of the emblem books could hardly be expected not to recognise the symbol.¹⁵⁴

However complex the interpretation of details within the portrait might be, the overall message of the picture is uncomplicated. Bess does not appear to be connected with the somewhat insular, aesthetic world of court representation of the Queen at the end of her reign. Her very gender distances her from the melancholic, lovesick male courtiers pining for an untouchable virgin goddess. Instead, Bess's monarch is an example of royal power and authority, sanctified not by goddesses' attributes but by divine right and dynastic and national power, whose government over earth, sea and air is unquestionable. Bess's taste as revealed in this portrait may well be old-fashioned but it is also clear and straightforward.

The theme of the government of the nation is at its strongest in these three items or sets of items. It is supported by the carved statues which appear in the overmantels of the fireplaces in the 'Gallerie' and 'best bed Chamber', depicting Justice, Mercy and Charity, all essential qualities for the good governor to possess. The overmantel in the 'with drawing Chamber' has been lost but it is a likely proposition that it, too, would have had a relevant carving in it.¹⁵⁵ The

¹⁵⁴ Identification of the sources of all the motifs on the skirt would obviously be advantageous. One sea monster - the double-spouting whale in the centre above the iris - appears to be taken from Konrad Gesner's *De Avibus et Piscibus* (1560), although it has been reversed, and the same source may have produced some or all of the other monsters. The flowers seem too standardised to be traced to a particular source.

¹⁵⁵ There is now an alabaster panel depicting Apollo and the Muses placed over the fireplace there. It was brought to Hardwick from Chatsworth by the 6th Duke of Devonshire in the early nineteenth century. It was probably originally placed in the Muses Chamber at Chatsworth although the 6th Duke found it in store there. It carries the royal arms and the initials 'ER' and would thus have

Queen's power and the authority given to her by legal descent are also marked in the pictures, especially where Elizabeth appears amongst her immediate predecessors, Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary in the 'high great Chamber' and as the culmination of a longer series of English monarchs in the 'Gallerie', where she is attended by all the monarchs from Edward II to Mary.¹⁵⁶ Here in the 'Gallerie' she also appears amongst a number of English aristocrats and in the presence of the monarchs of Scotland, France and Spain, firmly establishing her proper place in the world. The last portrait of Queen Elizabeth is to be found in the 'low great Chamber' where, as discussed earlier in the chapter, she represents the top of the hierarchy of authority which keeps the room's main occupants, the upper servants, in their social place.

With the exception of the last portrait in the 'lowe great Chamber', all the elements which contribute to the celebration of good government in the person of the Queen, the good governor, are to be found in the state rooms on the second floor. These are the rooms in which the Queen would have been received in person in the extremely unlikely case that she had visited. By the time of Hardwick's construction there can have been no real thought that the Queen would venture so far and so the rooms can have flattered the Queen only through report. They are rooms only intended to be seen properly by Bess's peers, people who might be assumed to have some degree of education, sense of fashion and appreciation of trends in celebrating the Queen. The theme runs through these

contributed to whatever scheme of praise to the monarch existed at Chatsworth. Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 253-4, shows that it dates to after 1567 and was probably therefore associated with the enlargement of the house in the 1570s. A similar but coloured panel is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Museum Number A.12-1924).

¹⁵⁶ The inventory names Richard III twice in the 'Gallerie' but it is likely that Richard II was meant for the first one of them. Otherwise, the pictures are listed in chronological order of reign, itself indicative of an organised sense of history in the hang of the pictures. *Of Household Stuff*, p. 49. See also Appendix Six.

state rooms in close proximity with the theme of government of the self, to which in the person of the monarch it is so closely linked, and with the statement of Bess's personal identity and family status. Whilst celebrating the good monarch, Bess is therefore able to celebrate the good subject at the same time, the supporting player without whose presence the governor's role is meaningless.

Bess chooses to celebrate the nation's good government by celebrating the governor. Her Queen is primarily a figure of authority and power, as shown clearly in the full-length portrait. The hangings of the Virtues and their Contraries show her to be a monarch who is guided by the rather strict doctrines of religion and whose success, in a motif harking back to the very earliest days of her reign when the young Queen was held to require educating and directing, rests on her ability to trample rebellious tendencies underfoot through the proper exercise of virtuous government. The government shown in the frieze has lost this sense of danger and is entirely celebratory rather than admonitory or didactic. The portrait and the hangings are essentially old-fashioned in their imagery, even though they are contemporary with the frieze, and it is tempting to suggest that they may be more in harmony with Bess's own taste. The least obvious part of the Queen's imagery in these examples is the celebration of her unchanging youth and her virginity, her persona as the inviolable maiden for whom the court youths pined. By her very gender, Bess, the loyal and dutiful subject, is excluded from the most potent – if fanciful – parts of the celebration of Elizabeth in her last years. For her, the real and pragmatic virtues of good government are more important than the impossible myths.

Conclusion

It is possible that Bess and her contemporaries would have read more themes than these into the decoration of Hardwick Hall. However, there is a strong argument that these were the most important themes, that they were intended, that they were well-developed by the furnishings and structural decoration, and that they had a relevance to which contemporaries would have responded. The three themes show a development from the simple worldly concerns of heraldry and social status, through the more sophisticated matter of an individual's public and private virtue, to the commemoration of national success expressed through celebration of the monarch's good government. The scheme varies according to the changing social spaces in which its elements are situated. Thus simple statements of ancestral and continuing authority, as displayed in Hardwick family heraldry, are suitable for the lowest status public areas, whilst the more involved displays of family connections are reserved for the private areas and for the medium status public areas. The more intellectually challenging themes are explored in the high status areas of the second floor, where they would be seen by an educated and courtly elite trained to interpret their messages. Bess clearly understands the need to vary the decorative themes and the manner of their communication according to the different audiences to be found in the different social spaces of her house.

Discussion of these three decorative themes reveals a great deal about Bess's interests and preoccupations, and about the image which she wanted to present to the world. It is apparent that she wished to be identified with ideas of old aristocracy and with the continuity of authority at Hardwick. Association with the peerage and the power and prestige which accompanies it are key for her. She

also wishes to be identified with an educated, courtly world which would understand and delight in references and allusions to classical literature and mythology and to current fashions in imagery. She shows an interest, which is probably sincere and heartfelt, in matters of public and private morality, expressed through an exploration of virtue but not, apparently, through too much overtly religious material. Her loyalty to the Queen is expressed very clearly and yet in a manner which appears quite well tailored to Bess's own values. As noted, Bess's celebration of the Queen is based on Elizabeth's authority and power, and on her moral and dynastic rights, rather than on the more fanciful iconography with which the Queen was usually celebrated in her final years. Bess had perhaps known her monarch for too long to wish to play games of idle flattery. Whilst loyalty to the present queen would not inherently exclude plans for Arbella to become the next monarch, there is nothing in the decoration of Hardwick to indicate that the building was intended specifically as a palace for Bess's granddaughter or that her claims to the throne were to be celebrated in imagery or allusion. Perhaps more surprisingly, there is little in the decorative theme to suggest that Hardwick was intended to be seen as 'the ancestral location of the Cavendishes'.¹⁵⁷ Rather, it was intended as a monument for Bess, her life and her values.

¹⁵⁷ Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 198.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

In Chapter One it was established that the intention of this study was to consider the nature and purpose of the original furnishings and decoration of Hardwick Hall. However, it is clear that the furnishings and decorations themselves are inanimate objects and the motive force for their use comes from their owner, Bess of Hardwick, the creator of the ensemble of architecture, furnishings and decoration to be seen at Hardwick in 1601. It is therefore the purpose of this concluding chapter to pull together the strands of evidence presented in the main text and to review them in the context of Bess of Hardwick as a patron, her opportunities, resources and motivation.

Discussion of the physical characteristics of the furnishings and decoration was based around four simple questions: what did Bess own; how did she acquire it; how did she use it; and how did these objects and her use of them compare with the practices of her contemporaries? The answer to the first question was provided by the 1601 inventories of Hardwick Hall, Hardwick Old Hall and Chatsworth. However, detailed analysis of Bess's will, to which they formed an essential appendage, was necessary in order to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of the inventory in providing a complete picture of the contents of Hardwick Hall in that year. To enable this close consideration, Bess's will, never previously published in full, has been presented here as Appendix Four. The will makes it clear that the inventory was intended for the specific purpose of making bequests, not for listing the entire contents of Hardwick, and so it has been suggested that some of the

house's actual contents may have been excluded from it, but that these exclusions do not devalue the inventory's usefulness.

The second issue, that of how Bess acquired the furnishings, has been addressed primarily from close study of her surviving account books in the archive at Chatsworth. It is clear that although Hardwick was a new house Bess did not furnish it with new belongings. Instead, the furnishings were a mixture of items from her previous houses, items purchased second-hand in the 1590s at the time when the house was under construction, and completely new items purchased or made during the same period. When money was spent on furnishings for Hardwick it can be seen that the purchases were prudent and economical, combining quality with reasonable prices. However, good housewifery was also allied to a keen sense of the degree of show which was requisite for an aristocrat. Detailed comparison of the 1601 inventory with Bess's earlier inventories for Chatsworth (1559 and 1560s), and Northaw (*c.* 1540-1547), presented here as appendices, shows that some of the furnishings of Hardwick had already been in Bess's possession for a considerable period. However, the greater number of furnishings, including many of the most luxurious items, must be presumed to have come from Chatsworth and to have been acquired by Bess during the period of Chatsworth's greatest importance in the 1570s and 1580s. The misfortune which has led to the absence of any inventories or household accounts for this period cannot be overstated. If the reasonable assumption is made that Hardwick was meant to be impressive, then it is revealing that a new building could be filled with older furnishings without any loss of prestige. The re-use of old furnishings on one hand suggests financial discretion on Bess's part but on the other hand suggests an intentional assertion of Hardwick's continuity with the past, a theme

also reflected in the iconographic messages of the building's decoration and the disposition of some of the older furnishings in the house. Economy, a sense of historical tradition and even sentiment here go hand in hand.

Consideration of how Bess used her furnishings led to the obvious statement that the contents of each room reflected the room's status and function. In Chapter Two discussion of the 'social' architecture of Hardwick New Hall, the relationship between the organisation of the interior spaces and the functions of the different areas of the house, showed that the building was made up of a series of hierarchies and boundaries which governed the social practices of the occupants. The furnishings reinforced these divisions. This was done by the provision or withholding of certain types of furniture and by the quality of the materials used in it. This practice relied on commonly understood rules which Bess has been shown to follow, although in some matters, such as the precedence given to certain types of textile over other types or techniques, Bess followed her own preferences rather than those revealed in the inventories of her contemporaries. In each case the patterns of use are strong enough to show that Bess was making conscious rather than coincidental statements about the relationship between furnishings and status.

These patterns of use are one of the ways in which Bess's furnishings have been compared in this study with those of her contemporaries. In several ways it has been suggested that Bess sometimes appears to be a little out of date or conservative by comparison with others. As will be discussed below, there is no reason to suppose that Bess was restricted by economic pressures and these suggestions that Bess's furnishings were a little old-fashioned and idiosyncratic may well be connected with the way in which many of the furnishings were

acquired over a long period and with Bess's advanced age at the time in which Hardwick was created. In sheer quantity of possessions, Bess usually appears towards the top of the tables which have been prepared as a means of comparing her furnishings with other people's, and the nearest point of comparison is often Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whose contacts with Bess will be discussed below. In quantity and in quality of furnishings it is obvious that Bess had a clear understanding of the role such possessions could play in creating a suitable sense of magnificence and social discrimination in the house of an aristocrat.

The second part of this study, contained in Chapter Four, was concerned with the furnishings and decoration as iconographic objects capable of conveying messages from and about Bess to the original viewers. The principal questions were: what themes are presented; how do individual pieces contribute to these themes; how are the themes distributed through the house; and how would a contemporary have interpreted the messages? Inherent in these questions was the assumption that there was an overall iconographic scheme.

Three themes have been presented as dominating the decorative scheme at Hardwick. These are the assertion of identity, the government of the self and the government of the nation, and through these themes Bess made comments about her sense of personal status, about the importance of virtue and about her loyalty to the Queen. It was recognised that there might be other themes arising from the furnishings and decoration of the house and that ultimately each individual viewer would have made his or her own interpretation of them, but these three themes have been chosen because they involve the principal furnishings and decoration and because these major items were probably all commissioned by Bess rather than acquired ready made.

The first theme, the assertion of identity, was illustrated primarily by Bess's use of heraldry, a language which allowed her to make statements about her lineage, the continuity of her links with the past at Hardwick, her status and her family connections. The heraldry revealed that Bess was primarily concerned with the Hardwick name and with her sense of historical continuity and authority. It also suggested that the achievement of worldly status was more important to Bess than the future of the Cavendish name and the future ownership of Hardwick. Where heraldry was used to record her children, prominence was given to the arms of those who achieved aristocratic status and the right to a coronet, her daughters Elizabeth and Mary, not her heir, Henry, or her favourite son, William, the designated inheritor of Hardwick. Contemporary viewers would have been left with the clear message that, in heraldic terms at least, Hardwick New Hall began and ended with Elizabeth Hardwick.

The second theme, government of the self, embodied the idea that the individual should improve himself or herself through the practice of virtue and therefore needed to be educated in the proper virtues as revealed through the lessons of good and bad examples from the past and from literature. The theme was considered primarily through discussion of the hangings embroidered with the classical heroines Penelope, Lucretia, Artemesia, Zenobia and Cleopatra, and the needlework cushion covers illustrating stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. As these subjects indicate, this theme required a higher level of sophistication from its viewers in order to understand the messages and their allusions and it was therefore presented in the rooms reserved for Bess's higher-status visitors. However, irregularities which have been perceived in the choice of heroines and their virtues, especially the decision to include the figure of Cleopatra amongst

them, have raised questions about the intellectual integrity of the hangings and their interpretation which remain unresolved. The cushion covers worked with stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* do not raise the same questions and seem to be straightforward pictorial representations of well-known moral stories concerning pride, disobedience, vanity, wastefulness and the perils of weak government. In addition to their moral lessons, they are most instructive in the way in which they show Bess following a fashionable literary trend, as demonstrated by the popularity of Arthur Golding's English translation of *Metamorphoses*. The last element in this discussion was the overmantel with the biblical quotation, 'The conclusion of all thinges is to feare god and keepe the commaundements.'¹ Unlike the other artefacts, this appeared in a room intended primarily for Bess's social inferiors and it was suggested that whereas the elite were given examples of individual virtue and heroism to emulate, the lower orders were merely reminded of their subordinate status.

The third iconographic scheme in this study represented the government of the nation through an overt celebration of Queen Elizabeth. It was considered through the detailed analysis of the frieze in the 'high great Chamber', the appliqué hangings of Virtues and their Contraries, and the portrait of Queen Elizabeth, all items which were displayed in the best rooms of the house and were therefore intended for an elite audience. The frieze represents the Queen in the person of the goddess Diana, surrounded by creatures signifying qualities which a good governor should possess and by figures and scenes representing the seasons and the bounty of the countryside when it is well governed. Although some parts of the frieze remain unclear, it has been shown that it depicts the Queen as a figure

¹ Ecclesiastes 12. 13.

of power and authority, aware of all and strong in government, even though physically absent. It has echoes of Virgil's Fourth Eclogue and of the *Astraea* theme, and is therefore inspired by the imagery being used by the courtly elite of the period to honour the elderly Queen. However, it is here suggested that the imagery is relatively straightforward and lacks the complexity and ingenuity of some other visual and literary schemes. The appliqué panels of the Virtues and their Contraries also celebrate the Queen but do so in a more didactic and less fulsome manner. They form part of an extensive contemporary repertoire of images associating the Queen with the Theological and Cardinal Virtues and emphasising that the good governor is a virtuous governor, a theme explored through comparison with the Coronation Pageants of 1559. It has also been suggested here that the panels representing Temperance and Sardanapalus, and Faith and Mahomet convey allusions to contemporary events which would have been clearly understood by their original viewers. The final element of this discussion was the full-length portrait of Queen Elizabeth. Unlike some other contemporary depictions, it avoids imagery of the Queen as a chaste, eternally youthful goddess and instead presents a monarch who is powerful and unyielding, surrounded by traditional symbols of authority, dynastic strength and imperial aspiration. Bess's monarch, as revealed in all these items, was a ruler with the qualities of virtue, authority and strength, imagery which was perhaps a little old-fashioned by the fanciful standards of the 1590s. Bess has been shown to be aware of court tastes but to have been detached from them by distance, age, gender and possibly education.

Discussion of the iconography of the original furnishings and decorations of Hardwick Hall revealed that Bess chose to fill her house with a very rich visual

and intellectual decorative scheme, and it is therefore clear that she wished to imitate some aspects of the prevailing courtly taste for deeply allusive and metaphorical imagery with which to test and amuse her visitors whilst displaying her own sophistication. Her celebration of the Queen shows loyalty and devotion and therefore indirectly celebrates Bess herself as well as Queen Elizabeth. Her observations on personal virtue reveal an ethical code to which she may or may not have lived up personally but which she would wish to have associated with her public personality. But the most surprising messages in fact come from Bess's use of heraldry, where it is clearly shown that Bess was not a dynast or a queen-maker but a monument builder.

In the course of this study basic questions about the nature and purpose of the original furnishings and decoration of Hardwick Hall have been asked and answered. However, the evidence has raised a number of other issues which must be addressed. The furnishings and decoration are, in themselves, inanimate objects and they are only brought to life by Bess herself. It is therefore necessary to give some consideration to Bess as a patron, her resources, influences and, above all, her motivation to create Hardwick. Within the context of this work, this discussion must be relatively brief but it may, perhaps, indicate a useful direction for further research.

Discussion of Hardwick's decorative scheme has raised questions about Bess's ability to create a complex iconographic strategy and so it is appropriate to consider her resources for such a project. There are no records of Bess's formal education and any comments on it must be drawn from inferences taken from her achievements. That she could read, write and figure is obvious and her ability in business and legal matters need not be restated. Her academic and intellectual

attainments and interests are, however, more vague. This is in part due to the absence of information about what books she possessed. The 1601 Hardwick inventory mentions only six books: 'my Ladies bookes viz: Calvin uppon Jobe, Covered with russet velvet, the resolution, Salomans proverbes, a booke of meditations, too other bookes Covered with black velvet', all of which are to be found in 'my Ladies Bed Chamber'.² An interest in religion is immediately apparent.³ Although the entry is not without ambiguity, it is possible to interpret it as one book covered with russet velvet and five books covered with black velvet. This would lead to the possibility that only books with decorative bindings were to be included in the inventory, whose purpose was to list items which were to be bequeathed with the house in perpetuity. The probability remains, therefore, that there were other books in the house which were not included in the inventory.

The household accounts show the purchase of many books but hardly any can be associated with Bess rather than with her son, William. One entry which is relevant notes the payment 'ffor M^r Smithes sermons for my La: vj^s', which appears in December 1601.⁴ One more book is known from other sources. In her will Bess left to her eldest daughter, Frances, 'my greate booke of Gould sett with

² *Of Houshold Stuff*, pp. 54-5. Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 247, notes that 'this looks much more like Bess's bed time reading than a catalogue of her entire library', and suggests that there may have been other books packed into trunks or coffers and not listed individually, or that 'there may have been a library in the Old Hall (as there was during the seventeenth century) and an entire book-list may simply have gone missing'.

³ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 247-8, makes some comments on the identities of these books. Whilst Bess's religion will not be discussed in detail here, it is worth noting that it seems to have been in general terms 'middle of the road' Protestant. The books listed here are general, rather than specialist, works. The religious preamble to her will (Appendix Four), although more prolix than usual, is otherwise conventional in tone. I am grateful to Professor Bernard Capp and Dr. Peter Marshall for their comments on this preamble. The pictures of the Virgin Mary which appear in the 1601 inventory had hitherto suggested a vein of Catholicism but the evidence that they may be traced back to Northaw and the earlier part of the sixteenth century lessens the strength of this suggestion. Bess never made loud assertions of her faith and was certainly never eulogised for her piety.

⁴ Hardwick MS 10a. The official pagination for this manuscript ends at fol. 72, after which identification is by date. *The Sermons of Master Henry Smith* was first published in 1591 and went into several later editions, including one of 1601 printed by Felix Kyngston for Thomas Man. Like Bess's other identified books, it was a work of popular rather than specialist religion.

stones, with her fathers Picture and my picture drawne in yt'.⁵ This book is probably also identifiable with one mentioned in the accounts for May 1550 as 'my wyffe Booke being sett wt stones made by Gardener the goldsmyth', which cost in total £13 6s., and with an entry in a list of jewels in 1567 for 'Itm one booke of gold wth .x. Rubies and iij sasers and one dyamond wth ij pyctures in the same'.⁶ The splendour of the book's covering is evident but the title of the work is never revealed. Although this book was clearly in Bess's possession in 1601 it is not in the inventory. There are also no books mentioned in the earlier Chatsworth inventories but it is interesting to note the presence of books at Northaw in the 1540s. These were 'iij englysche boks scilt Chawcer ffroyssarte cronicles & a boke of ffrenche & Englysche', 'the byble in Englysche', and several mass books.⁷ As other items from Northaw were later used at Hardwick it is reasonable to wonder whether Bess still possessed these. At the very least, the Northaw books indicate that Bess had spent some of her early life in an environment where there was an interest in literature.

Although there is little evidence about Bess's own education, it is clear that she appreciated the value of an education. Her own sons received training suitable for young gentlemen. William attended Eton and then Clare College, Cambridge, before being admitted to Gray's Inn to study law.⁸ Henry was also sent to Eton and Gray's Inn but rather than go to university he travelled as a young man in Germany, Padua, Venice and Paris, and in middle age crossed Europe again to Constantinople.⁹ These activities might be interpreted as

⁵ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 188^v. Appendix Four.

⁶ Folger Shakespeare Library, MS X.d.486; Sheffield Archives, MD 6311/1 and MD 6311/3.

⁷ Northaw inventory, pp. 5-7; Appendix One.

⁸ Carole Levin, 'Cavendish, William, first earl of Devonshire (1551-1626)'.

⁹ D.J.B. Trim, 'Cavendish, Henry (1550-1616)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/4935>> [accessed 16 October 2004]. His travels in Europe,

educating men of the world rather than men of letters, although William certainly became a keen purchaser of books and pamphlets in later life, even if his taste was perhaps not noticeably intellectual.¹⁰ Until William had his own house at Oldcotes, many of these books must have been at Hardwick.

The education which Bess gave her grand-daughter, Arbella Stuart, was rigorous, intellectual and suitable for a royal princess. As Sara Jayne Steen has written, Bess 'assured her granddaughter an education on the model of Queen Elizabeth's and provided her with excellent tutors', so that Arbella 'became one of the most learned women at James's court'.¹¹ Arbella was fluent in French, Latin and Italian, and competent in Spanish, Greek and Hebrew, whilst her letters reveal a close knowledge of the Bible and of classical authors, including Virgil, Lucan and Plutarch.¹² Her abilities were frequently observed and commented on at court, which suggests that she was encouraged to display her intellectual skills publicly and often. Whilst there is nothing to suggest that Bess's scholarship came close to that of her grand-daughter, it is telling that Bess could commission and supervise such an education. Arbella possessed books which would have been at Hardwick but are not mentioned in the inventory. In a letter of March 1603 she notes that she had sent her page 'for somm bookes into my quondam study chamber'.¹³ Her tutors would have been members of Bess's household, as were the tutors of William's children and presumably at an earlier period the tutors of

1570-1, where he was accompanied by Gilbert Talbot, his brother-in-law and step-brother, are mentioned in letters. *A Calendar of the Shrewsbury and Talbot Papers*, I, 41-2; II, 363. 'Mr. Harrie Cavendish', *passim*. The education of Bess's third son, Charles, and his three sisters is currently unknown.

¹⁰ William Cavendish's account books in the archive at Chatsworth are full of purchases of books and pamphlets, and provide a useful resource for the study of the literary tastes of a courtier at the turn of the sixteenth century. The size of his library is perhaps also indicated by the construction for him in 1603 of book presses measuring thirty yards on the outside and twenty more within. Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick MS 10b, fol. 4^v. I hope to return to this in the future.

¹¹ *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart*, p. 24.

¹² *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart*, pp. 24-6.

¹³ *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart*, p. 156.

Bess's own children. One at least of these men, James Starkey, who was tutor to William's sons, was also one of Bess's household chaplains, another potential source of learning in the household. When considering Bess's ability to create or interpret a complex iconographical idea, it is vital to remember that she had easy access to learning of the highest calibre, as well as the belief that a classical education, fluency in languages and the ability to perform intellectually before your peers were necessary skills for an aristocrat and courtier, especially one with royal connections.

It is clear that Bess had access to intellectual ideas within her household. It is also apparent that she had access to sources of visual imagery, either directly or through her craftsmen. Anthony Wells-Cole's thorough research has shown that a great number of Bess's furnishings and decorations at Hardwick were derived from contemporary engraved sources emanating from Europe and that in this she was in line with the practices of her contemporaries.¹⁴ Whilst it is sometimes possible to disagree with the lengths to which he takes his interpretations, Wells-Cole's identifications of sources are persuasive. It is not appropriate to quote every identification of a source provided by him but several key points may be drawn from his work in summary. First, the majority of prints which were copied for Bess came from Antwerp, the most prolific centre of print and book production in Europe.¹⁵ Other sources came from France, from Paris and Lyons, and these are associated with the period when Mary, Queen of Scots, was within the Talbot household.¹⁶ Secondly, the identified sources cover a wide period and show that Bess or her advisers were keen to keep up to date with available

¹⁴ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 247-95.

¹⁵ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 45-7.

¹⁶ For example, Claude Paradin, *Devises Heroïques* (Lyons, 1557), and Pierre Belon, *La Nature et Diversité des Poissons* and *L'Histoire de la Nature des Oiseaux* (Paris, 1557), which provided designs for the Oxburgh Hangings. Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 256.

sources. The majority of sources seem to date from the 1550s and 1560s, as if the bulk of a collection had been established then, but at least one source, the *Venationes Ferarum, Avium, Piscium [...]*, engraved by Philips Galle after designs by Johannes Stradanus, which was used in depth for the frieze in the High Great Chamber and more briefly elsewhere, dates from 1578.¹⁷ The two latest sources identified by Wells-Cole date from 1586.¹⁸ Thirdly, Wells-Cole notes the considerable skill demonstrated by the craftsman who used the prints as sources for furnishings and decorations at Hardwick, particularly when selecting and combining figures from a number of sources into one design, rather than slavishly copying a whole design from one source. This, he observes, was probably a skill possessed by craftsmen who had learnt their art abroad, and he suggests that the most likely man to have advised Bess on her visual imagery and the sources for it was John Balehouse, a member of her household.¹⁹

Balehouse is a very interesting figure and it is attractive to follow Anthony Wells-Cole's assertion that

it was probably Balehouse more than anyone else who worked out for Bess – presumably under her direction and with her active participation – the various decorative programmes that run through the houses, marshalling for use in masonry and plasterwork, joinery, textiles and painting a range of German, French and Flemish printed source material.²⁰

In the end, the evidence for Balehouse's fulfilling this role is circumstantial. He appears in the account books most often as John Painter but it has been proved

¹⁷ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 270-1.

¹⁸ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 268 and 276.

¹⁹ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 285.

²⁰ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 288-9.

that John Painter is the same person as John Balechouse and the more anglicised surname is probably an attempt to cope with the spelling of a foreign name.²¹ John Balechouse or John Painter first appears by name in Bess's account books in May 1578, when he was working at Chatsworth, but for the preceding year there are costs recorded in connection with the work of 'paynters' and John has at least one named colleague, Richard Painter.²² It is not known when Balechouse first joined the household as the surviving account books only open in 1577, and the next part of his career is also obscured by the break in the account books between 1580 and 1590.²³ By the time the accounts start again, Balechouse is becoming a person of more consequence, with a room at the Old Hall, which may have been a work room, and an annual wage of £2, tenancy of a farm in a nearby village and later the New Inn, now the Hardwick Inn, as well as frequent generous sums of money for tasks which are not detailed.²⁴ There are also gifts of money to Balechouse's wife and at Christmas 1595 his son, James, appears in the wages' list for the first time.²⁵ Both men survived Bess and continued to work for her son, William. Anthony Wells-Cole suggests that Balechouse died around 1618 but in fact the account books show him to be still alive in April 1623 and there is no definite indication of his subsequent death.²⁶ Whilst working for Bess he undertook a

²¹ The identification is based on the fact that John Painter and John Balechouse enjoy the same wages and other benefits, whilst never appearing together in the accounts. The man signed himself 'Jhon Ballechous' (Hardwick MS 6, fol. 210). An earlier account book of 1551 shows several craftsmen named after their crafts in the account books, including John and Robert Joyner and William Playster (Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick MS 2, fol. 10). Stallybrass, 'Bess of Hardwick's Buildings and Building Accounts', pp. 382-3, suggests that John Painter may be the alias of another craftsman, John Kniveton, who appears briefly in the accounts in 1579 but was given another name to avoid confusion with Bess's Kniveton relatives. This possibility has been superseded by the identification of John Painter with John Balechouse.

²² Hardwick MS 4, fol. 44^v.

²³ Anthony Wells-Cole suggests that Balechouse was responsible for Bess's painting of *Ulysses and Penelope*, which is dated 1570. *Dynasties*, p. 101.

²⁴ Hardwick MS 7. 'John paynters chambr', which is shown to be in a garret, is mentioned in Hardwick MS 6, fols 46 and 238. It is not mentioned in the 1601 inventory of the Old Hall.

²⁵ Hardwick MS 7, fols 51, 76 and 141.

²⁶ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 286; Hardwick MS 29, p. 741.

variety of tasks. Painting was obviously his primary activity and there are specific accounts which connect him with projects such as the painting of the hangings of the Acts of the Apostles, which are not mentioned in the 1601 inventory because they were being created at that time, the frieze in the 'Gallerie', the refurbishment of old hangings and the painting of Bess's coach.²⁷ He also acted as Bess's general foreman and was responsible for paying the workmen and for taking some of the decisions on building matters, such as that to raise the height of the windows on the turrets at the New Hall.²⁸ In addition to these substantial and creative works, he was also trusted with the preparation of Bess's coffin and vault at Derby to receive her body in 1608.²⁹

There is certainly a great deal of documentary evidence to support the theory that Balehouse was a key contributor to the creation of Hardwick and should, therefore, be considered as one of Bess's resources. There is less evidence to prove Anthony Wells-Cole's assertion that 'it was probably Balehouse more than anyone else who worked out for Bess [...] the various decorative programmes that run through the houses'.³⁰ As a skilled artist, he may well have been able to advise Bess on the sources of the visual imagery but that is not the same as providing the intellectual basis of the iconographic scheme. Nothing is known about Balehouse's background or education. Anthony Wells-Cole notes three possible origins for Balehouse: he could be Flemish, he could be part of a French family which had been resident near Hardwick for three centuries, or, the theory to which Wells-Cole himself adheres, Balehouse could be identifiable

²⁷ Hardwick MS 8, fol. 82 (hangings); Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 2*, p. lxviii (frieze); Hardwick MS 7, fol. 195 (refurbished hangings); Hardwick MS 10b, fol. 5^v (coach).

²⁸ Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 2*, p. lxviii.

²⁹ Hardwick MS 29, p. 7.

³⁰ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, pp. 288-9.

with the painter Jehan Balechou or Baleschoux, born in the period 1530-1535 and resident in Tours in 1557.³¹ Wells-Cole observes that one of Balechou's sons, Pierre, was living in England by 1576 and implies that Balechou himself had come to England by that time. Furthermore, it is suggested that Balechou could have spent some time in the Netherlands on his way to England and would there have acquired some of the Flemish prints used at Hardwick, before finding employment on an English building project.³² The initial suggestion that Hardwick's Balechouse might be connected with the Balechou family of French artists is interesting and deserves further research. However, it is difficult to reconcile Jehan Balechou, born in 1535 at the latest, with John Balechouse, still living in 1623, and the Hardwick artist must surely be found in the next generation at least, perhaps coeval with Pierre Balechou, who was certainly active in England. It is perhaps also unnecessary to send the artist to the Netherlands in order to arrive at Hardwick with a collection of Flemish prints. Wells-Cole has himself shown that Antwerp was the prolific centre of the production of prints and that these were exported to England in great numbers and could be purchased readily in London and, no doubt, other towns and cities.³³

How Bess had access to visual images is still an issue. As discussed above, very few of her books are known, although it is extremely likely that she herself had more than are listed in the 1601 inventory and would also have had access to the collections of other members of the household. It is feasible that Balechouse

³¹ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 285 and notes. Wells-Cole's footnotes summarise the evidence about the Balechou family. The standard reference works record only that Jehan Balechou was active in Tours in 1557. Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, 37 vols (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1907-1950) II ([n.d.]), p. 405; Emmanuel Bénézit, *Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs*, rev. edn (Paris: Gründ, 1976), I, p. 400.

³² Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 286.

³³ Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration*, p. 5.

would have owned the prints himself or, more likely, would have been commissioned to acquire them by his patron, but there is no documentary evidence to demonstrate this. However, the household accounts do reveal that at least one member of the family was buying prints at the end of the 1590s. The enthusiasm of William Cavendish, Bess's son, for buying books and pamphlets has already been mentioned but the accounts also show a number of purchases by him of what may be interpreted as cheap prints, some of them coloured. For example:

twelve heads of philosophers and orators iiij^s [April 1599]
paper pictures 000-00-06 [October 1599]
for two suites of painted pepers of hercules xij laboures the twelve
apostles and the nyne worthies 000-05-06
[December 1599-April 1600]
iiij papers of the storie of Jacob & Esawe 000-00-8
[December 1600].³⁴

With the possible exception of the twelve philosophers and orators, these prints cannot be directly connected with any of the furnishings or decorations known at Hardwick but it is interesting to find evidence of a member of the patron's family purchasing these papers, whether for his own pleasure as part of his library or art collection, or as a practical tool for a craftsman to use as a source for other work.³⁵

Access to intellectual ideas and to visual imagery, skilled craftsmen and a member of the family able to act as agent in London may all be seen as resources

³⁴ Hardwick MS 10a, fols 39^v and 47^v; the two later entries are from the same MS but after the end of the official foliation, where identification is only possible from the date.

³⁵ The twelve philosophers and orators might be connected with similar printed heads which appear on the panelling in the state rooms, especially the 'high great Chamber'. Original prints have been applied to the wooden panelling and the whole has been painted and gilded to present a uniform appearance. This has always been assumed to date from the early seventeenth century and to have been put in place by William Cavendish rather than Bess.

on which to draw to create Hardwick but the chief resource must be Bess's wealth. Ultimately, it would be an exceedingly difficult task to calculate her income but David Durant has suggested that during the 1590s, 'Bess's gross annual receipts were an average £8300 of which an average £3000 came from her Talbot marriage settlement; by the end of the century the total had probably risen to a gross annual £10,000'.³⁶ These figures are likely to be conservative. The income was accrued from land, on the purchase of which Bess spent large amounts, from rents, from ventures such as coal mining, lead mining and iron works, from investment in business deals and speculative trading projects, and from money-lending. Unusually for a woman, her financial security was to a large extent under her own control. It is very difficult to make any meaningful comparison between Bess's annual income of £10,000 and those of her contemporaries, although it has been suggested that the average annual landed income of the Manners Earls of Rutland between 1587 and 1599 was £7021, and that the Earl of Northumberland had a landed income of about £11,000 in 1615.³⁷ However, it is apparent that Bess's annual income provided enough for her to spend as she chose and to support members of her family generously. Moreover, she could also afford to write off money for a period of time. Her will shows that the enormous sum of £5102, effectively half one year's income, was 'tould and Compted put vp in bagges and locked vp in a Chest' against the time that it should be needed to meet the various costs of her funeral and bequests.³⁸

Close scrutiny of the surviving building accounts has allowed Durant to estimate that Bess spent £5000 on building works at the two Hardwicks from

³⁶ Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, pp. 182 and 228-9.

³⁷ Lawrence Stone, *Family and Fortune: Studies in Aristocratic Finance in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 206; Malcolm Airs, *The Tudor & Jacobean House*, p. 95.

³⁸ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 190^v (Appendix Four).

1584 to 1598, a figure which appears modest by comparison with her annual income.³⁹ Using Durant's figures, it is possible to show that Bess expended an average of just 4% of her income each year on building the Hardwick Halls.⁴⁰ The figure of £5000 also appears modest by comparison with her expenditure on land and property during the same period. On at least three occasions Bess made purchases which dwarf her expenditure on building. In 1583 Bess bought the Hardwick estate itself for £9500, a sum which was probably in excess of her income for that year.⁴¹ A decade later she bought the neighbouring manors of Heath, Stainsby and Oldcotes for £3416, a little over one third of her estimated income.⁴² However, in 1599-1600 she made the even greater expenditure of £12,750 on parsonages and other land.⁴³ It is clear that investment in land and property, and the secure promise of future wealth which it brought with it, was more important to Bess than investment in building.

The figure of £5000 for the building of Hardwick may also be compared with estimates for the building of other aristocratic houses. However, as Malcolm Airs has observed, 'it is necessary to exercise the greatest caution in drawing conclusions about comparative expenditure on building' because of 'erratic methods of accounting'.⁴⁴ It is also very difficult to compare like with like, as the motives and ambitions of builders, as well as the circumstances surrounding their projects, differ. The absence of complete building accounts means that it is

³⁹ Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, pp. 229-31.

⁴⁰ Durant gives the figure of £5000 spent over a period of fourteen years, that is, an average of approximately £357 per year. He also gives a series of annual incomes which average out at £8512 per year. The sum of £357 represents about 4% of £8512. The sum of £5000 also therefore represents about 4% of £119,168, the amount of income which Bess can be thought to have accrued during the same fourteen-year period covered by the building accounts, based on an average yearly income of £8512.

⁴¹ Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 104.

⁴² Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, pp. 178 and 229.

⁴³ Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 229.

⁴⁴ Airs, *The Tudor & Jacobean Country House*, p. 94.

impossible to calculate a figure for the building of Chatsworth, which would make a particularly relevant comparison with Hardwick. Another pertinent comparison would have been George Talbot's Worksop, but the records for that house have also been lost. At Wollaton, a house whose date (1580-1588), location and scale are comparable to Hardwick, figures for building expenditure of £5200 and £8000 have been estimated.⁴⁵ Comparison with some of the great aristocratic builders of the period, however, only serves to emphasise Bess's building frugality. As Airs has said, 'the court nobility spent a greater proportion of their resources in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on ostentatious building than their predecessors', a remark borne out by the contemporary William Harrison's observation that the houses of the nobility were 'so magnificent and stately as the basest house of a baron doth often match in our days with some honors of princes in old time'.⁴⁶ The ability to consider the proportion of resources expended on building projects is severely constrained by the need to find examples where the building accounts for a large project have survived, along with adequate records from which to calculate income. However, to give one example, Lawrence Stone has calculated that Robert Cecil's average annual income in the period 1608-1612 was £49,660 and that his average expenditure on building during the same period was £13,500.⁴⁷ This shows that Cecil was willing to commit 27% of his income to building projects. Whilst there can be no realistic comparison between Cecil and

⁴⁵ Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 231, referring to Philip Emerson Rossell, 'The Building of Wollaton Hall (1580-1588)' (unpublished MA dissertation, University of Sheffield, 1957), no page number given. Rossell's figure of £5200 is based on a detailed analysis of the surviving building accounts in the Middleton Collection of the University of Nottingham Library. Pamela Marshall, *Wollaton Hall*, p. 7, quotes an estimate of £8000 without any discussion. Alice Friedman, *House and Household*, p. 165, also suggests a figure of around £8000 but without detailed explanation.

⁴⁶ Airs, *The Tudor & Jacobean Country House*, p. 95; William Harrison, *The Description of England*, ed. by Georges Edelen (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1968; repr. New York: Dover Publications, 1994), p. 199.

⁴⁷ Lawrence Stone, *Family and Fortune*, pp. 59-61. The majority of the building works were at Hatfield, with lesser works on Cranborne House, Salisbury House and its environs, and the New Exchange.

Bess on social, political or financial grounds, or between Hatfield House, Cecil's main building project at this time, and Hardwick Hall on grounds of scale, grandeur or purpose, the comparison of the percentage of their annual income which they chose to devote to building projects does remain valid. Put simply, Cecil appears to have considered building to have been a more important investment than Bess did.

The comparison may also be used to illuminate one further point about Bess's expenditure on building. Stone has calculated that Robert Cecil spent £38,848 on the building of Hatfield House between 1607 and 1612, a figure which may have contributed to his debt of £42,395 in 1610.⁴⁸ Similarly, Francis Willoughby's extravagance whilst building Wollaton, in addition to several unsuccessful business projects, caused him to borrow a great deal of money, and his failure to repay these loans ruined his finances and left him and his heirs with serious debts.⁴⁹ Despite the absence of any surviving building accounts with *which to verify the assertion*, it is also often stated that the ostentatious building works of Sir Christopher Hatton at Holdenby contributed to his debt problems.⁵⁰ Bess, however, owing to her considerable wealth but also her prudent expenditure, was not forced into debt in order to fund her building projects. It has previously been noted that many of the furnishings were already in Bess's possession and study of the account books has shown that Bess's remaining purchases in the 1590s were careful and economical. It is clear, therefore, that in comparison with

⁴⁸ Lawrence Stone, 'The Building of Hatfield House', *Archaeological Journal*, 112 (1955), 100-128 (p. 114).

⁴⁹ Alice Friedman, *House and Household*, pp. 138, 179-180. There were many financial, business and social contacts between Bess and Willoughby. On more than one occasion Bess loaned Willoughby money including in 1594 the sum of £3000, for which Willoughby used five of his manors as security. When Willoughby failed to repay this loan, Bess took over the manors, which were said to be worth £15,000. Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, pp. 176-7. It appears that Willoughby's annual income has not been calculated.

⁵⁰ For example, Girouard, 'Holdenby', pp. 1288-9.

Bess's financial resources, the building and fitting out of Hardwick were not extravagant. If a display of aristocratic magnificence was intended, it was to be achieved without threat to the real basis of Bess's power, her wealth.

Throughout this work the reasonable assumption has been made that Bess intended Hardwick to stand as a symbol of her status. It is therefore appropriate to give some consideration to the influences which would have helped her to define what would be suitable. Hardwick was created towards the end of a very long life, during which Bess had a large amount of contact with courtiers and court styles which could have influenced her development as a patron. Whilst Hardwick is often considered as an achievement of the last years of the sixteenth century, it has been shown that many of the contents had been made earlier for Chatsworth and even for Northaw and it is perhaps necessary to begin consideration of Bess's patronage in the middle of the century. As described in the introductory chapter, Bess's first exposure to a court style and to London may have come when she was in the household of Lord and Lady Zouch but this experience must have been magnified a few years later if she was, indeed, in the household of the Marquis and Marchioness of Dorset during her first widowhood. Her marriage to Sir William Cavendish brought her into contact with a circle of people who used building projects to assert their status and interests. Writing of the architectural patronage of the mid-Tudor period, Sir John Summerson notes a group of men, all in some way connected with Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, who were engaged in substantial building projects and encouraged the development of new decorative styles of building.⁵¹ In addition to Somerset, who built magnificently at Somerset House and Syon, these men included John Dudley, later Earl of

⁵¹ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, p. 42.

Warwick and Duke of Northumberland, at Dudley Castle, William Sharington at Lacock, and John Thynne at Longleat. William Cavendish, who may have owed some of his advancement to Edward Seymour, must be seen as another member of this government circle, albeit a junior one, whose more modest position, together perhaps with a good sense of political survival, allowed him a longer career.⁵² Cavendish's house at Chatsworth should therefore in the future be considered alongside the building projects of his colleagues.

The building of Chatsworth shows that Cavendish and Bess could contemplate a grand building project but the discovery of the Northaw inventory shows that Cavendish had a well-developed sense of luxury and display in the furnishings of his house before he married Bess. I hope to return to a detailed study of the inventory in the future but even a preliminary survey shows that he had a rich supply of wall-hangings, beds and other furnishings, as well as a particularly large collection of paintings. It becomes a very strong likelihood that William Cavendish had a considerable influence on his younger wife's development of a sense of style, of what was suitable for people climbing the social ladder, and of what could be achieved with a lavish display of possessions. The survival of some items from Northaw to Hardwick shows a solid link between these phases of Bess's life.

This period also shows the formation of Bess's social network and her contacts with people at the heart of the court. The earliest household accounts show connections with people such as the Marchioness of Dorset, the Marquis of Northampton, the Earl and Countess of Warwick and possibly Edward, Lord

⁵² Jack, 'Cavendish, Sir William (1508-1557)'.

Clinton, and his wife.⁵³ The Cavendishes' choice of godparents for their children, whilst perhaps reflecting social aspirations rather than actual relationships, also shows that they were aiming high. In addition to a few Derbyshire friends and family members who sponsored the two youngest children, the godparents included the Marquis and Marchioness of Dorset, their daughters Lady Jane and Lady Katherine Grey, Katherine, Dowager Duchess of Suffolk, her son the Duke of Suffolk, the Earl and Countess of Warwick (later Duke and Duchess of Northumberland), the Earl of Shrewsbury (father of Bess's future husband), the Marchioness and possibly the Marquis of Northampton, the Marquis of Winchester, the Earl of Pembroke, Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, the Princess Elizabeth and Queen Mary.⁵⁴ As time passed, Bess's network of family, friends, business and social contacts increased, especially after her marriage to George Talbot. However, once Talbot had been restricted by the limitations imposed by his guardianship of Mary, Queen of Scots, Bess was only an occasional visitor to court and relied heavily on other people to inform her of changing tastes, as shown, for example, in her use of the court official Anthony Wingfield, a relative by marriage, to act as intermediary between herself and Lady Cobham and Lady Sussex on the matter of suitable gifts for the Queen.⁵⁵ Gifts ranging from gold cups to venison pasties, as well as letters, were regularly dispensed by Bess in order to keep the ties of this social network together.⁵⁶

⁵³ Folger Shakespeare Library, MS X.d.486. The doubt over Lord Clinton is caused because Bess and Cavendish received the Lord Admiral and his wife at some point in 1550, the year in which Lord Clinton succeeded the Earl of Warwick in that post, and it is not clear which person is meant.

⁵⁴ Collins, *Historical Collections*, pp. 11-12. Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 28, suggests that William Parr, Marquis of Northampton, was godfather to Elizabeth Cavendish, whereas Collins suggests it was her brother, Henry.

⁵⁵ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, pp. 95-6. For Bess's information network see Daybell, '“Suche newes as on the Quenes hye wayes we have mett”'.

⁵⁶ For example, Hardwick Drawers H/143/8, which is a list of plate, mentions a gilt basin and a ewer like a ship given to the Earl of Leicester, a great standing cup given to the Lord Chancellor (probably Christopher Hatton) and a gold cup given to William Cecil, the last two being given at

In Chapter Three frequent comparisons were made between the furnishings of Robert Dudley's houses and Bess's furnishings at Hardwick. In part, this was inevitable given the quantity of inventory evidence available for Dudley's properties, but it is interesting to make some observations on the relationship between Dudley and Bess and whether he could have influenced her sense of style. As Lady Cavendish, Bess had included Dudley's parents, the Earl and Countess of Warwick, in her social network, although Bess and Cavendish would certainly have been the inferior partners in the connection. There is no evidence for an early link between Bess and Robert Dudley but surviving letters from the 1570s and 1580s suggest that Dudley was on friendly terms with both Bess and Talbot, and the secret betrothal between Arbella and Dudley's son, which was probably contrived without Talbot's knowledge, indicates a closer understanding.⁵⁷ Dudley's visit to Chatsworth in the summer of 1577 was the occasion of a great deal of refurbishment of rooms for his use, suggesting that Bess and Talbot recognised a certain standard of magnificence which would be necessary to surround such an important visitor. On two occasions Dudley had lent Bess his apartments at Leicester House and Richmond Palace whilst she visited court, at which times she would have had the opportunity to see and possibly admire his furnishings.⁵⁸ The Leicester House inventory of 1580, which has been used in Chapter Three, depicts that house just four years after Bess visited it and, although some changes are inevitable, it may well represent an ensemble of furnishings which Bess had actually seen. As there are so few examples of aristocratic houses which Bess is known to have visited, the

New Year 1587/8. The costs of these gifts are not known. However, Folger MS V.b.308 includes a 'fayre gylte boule' with a cover costing £11 13s. 7d. purchased as a gift for the Lord Chancellor in 1590 and a similar bowl costing £9 18s. 7d. for the Master of the Rolls (p. 10).

⁵⁷ Durant, *Arbella Stuart*, pp. 33-4.

⁵⁸ Levey, *An Elizabethan Inheritance*, p. 70.

opportunity to connect one such visit with an actual inventory is highly fortunate. An interest in Robert Dudley's works at Kenilworth may be presumed from a reference to the loan of plasterers. The accounts for May 1578 include, 'Item payed to Jhon plasterers to paye the plasterers that he browght wth him fro^m kenilworthe for iij weeks at v^d a daye vij^s vj^d'.⁵⁹ Whether Bess had seen the plasterers' work at Kenilworth or merely heard of it is unknown but it is possible that she had talked to Dudley about their common interest in building works. A final example of the way in which Bess may have considered Dudley to have been a model is to be found in the design of her tomb. As noted in Chapter One, Bess's tomb was designed by Robert Smythson, whose collection of drawings also includes a picture of Dudley's tomb in Warwick. Mark Girouard has observed that 'this is more likely to be a survey drawing than an original design: it was perhaps made at Lady Shrewsbury's order as a pattern for her own tomb [...] which appears to be to some extent inspired by it'.⁶⁰ If this is the case, it is a strong indication that Bess admired Dudley's taste.

It is straightforward to show that Bess had an impressive network of social and family links with a large number of courtiers and was a familiar figure at court. It is also possible to suggest that Bess may have been influenced by Robert Dudley but it is more difficult to find definite evidence of artistic exchange between Bess and her other peers. One of the earliest contacts was William Cavendish's request to Sir John Thynne in 1555 to borrow the 'connynge plaisterer at Longlete wch hath in yor hall and in other places of yor house made Dyvse pendaunts and other ptye thyngs', a request which Bess was to repeat,

⁵⁹ Hardwick MS 4, fol. 46.

⁶⁰ Girouard, 'The Smythson Collection', p. 36.

equally fruitlessly, in 1560.⁶¹ It cannot be supposed that Cavendish and Bess had seen Longleat themselves but they had obviously taken an interest in the work. The interest in other major building works continued and although there is no surviving evidence of Bess's requesting the plans of other houses, she certainly received descriptions of them, including one of the gallery and great chamber at Theobalds contained in a letter from her son, Charles.⁶² Although relations between Bess and her eldest son, Henry, deteriorated during the 1590s, she may well have heard about his travels in Europe in 1589. The account of these travels by Henry's servant, Fox, includes a particularly detailed description of the houses and gardens of the Fuggers in Augsburg, which is similar to the type of information which Bess received about Theobalds from Charles.⁶³ Surviving evidence does not show that Bess enjoyed a correspondence with anyone outside her family about architecture and building projects. However, her use of the architect Robert Smythson suggests an exchange of ideas with contemporaries and a definite awareness of their buildings.

Robert Smythson may be seen as the fashionable architect of Bess's social circle and family. Bess was obviously aware of his work at Longleat for Sir John Thynne and at Wollaton, where the patron, Sir Francis Willoughby, was a business contact of Bess's. Smythson's involvement with George Talbot's rebuilding of Worksop Manor, however, brought the architect much closer to Bess's orbit. It is likely that the project at Worksop, which was undertaken at

⁶¹ *Airs, The Tudor & Jacobean Country House*, p. 77. It is interesting to note that court rumour suggested Sir John Thynne as a possible new husband for Bess before she married George Talbot.

⁶² Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, Hardwick Drawers H/143/16. The only contemporary known to have requested a plan or 'platt' of Hardwick is Robert Cecil, who requested and received a copy in March 1608, less than a month after Bess died. Strangely, the request was made to Gilbert Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, rather than to William Cavendish, the house's new owner. The plan is not known to have survived in the Cecil family archive.

⁶³ 'Mr. Harrie Cavendish', pp. 6-7.

some time in the 1580s, was the work of Talbot alone, without the active participation of his wife, from whom he was estranged at the time.⁶⁴ It is more than likely, however, that Bess kept a close watch on how the house was developing, for reasons no doubt more personal than simple architectural curiosity. Her subsequent use of Smythson to design Hardwick New Hall and her tomb at Derby, whilst conceivably involving some element of competition with her late husband's projects, shows that Bess chose to remain with the architect whose work would have been familiar to her through the building projects of family and friends. That she stayed within the security of this network of architectural contacts and was not particularly influenced by the arguably more impressive contemporary building projects at Burghley, Theobalds, Holdenby and Kirby, whose patrons, Cecil and Hatton, are not known to have been particularly close to her, is perhaps indicative of one aspect of her architectural patronage.⁶⁵ It could well be suggested that in her architect, as in her craftsmen, many of whom had been employed by her or her friends for many years, she played safe and looked to the familiar and convenient.⁶⁶

Whilst there is some information about Bess's architectural contacts with other people, there is very little about her exchanges on other artistic matters.

⁶⁴ Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, pp. 110-15.

⁶⁵ Bess is known to have seen Holdenby. On her journey home from London in 1592 she made a brief detour to Holdenby but stayed only a matter of hours. It is usually assumed that this was primarily to see the architecture of the building and to give her ideas for Hardwick (Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*, p. 175). However, there is another possible reason for this visit. During her stay in London Bess had bought the *Gideon* tapestries from Sir William Hatton, Christopher Hatton's heir. It seems feasible that Bess went to Holdenby either to see where they had been hung or even to see them still in situ. As the tapestries are so large and represent a formidable bulk even when rolled or folded, it seems a practical possibility that the majority of the tapestries were still at Holdenby and Bess had made the purchase either sight unseen, based on the knowledge that their great scale was suitable for her new gallery at Hardwick, or having seen just a representative sample of the set. The accounts do not show any payments for the transport of the tapestries, which might have shown from where they were brought. The tapestries were not mended and hung until 1598 and it is reasonable to wonder where they had been kept until that time.

⁶⁶ The careers of her leading craftsmen are briefly outlined in Durant and Riden, *The Building of Hardwick Hall: Part 2*, pp. lx-lxxii.

There is, for example, no surviving documentary evidence of her requesting portraits from other people or of her portrait's being sent to them. However, the role of one contact must be considered. The evidence that Mary, Queen of Scots, spent a great deal of time during her captivity engaged in needlework and embroidery with Bess has been frequently rehearsed.⁶⁷ Talbot himself reported to Cecil that the Queen spent much time with Bess stitching and devising works. It is usually implied that the arrival of the more sophisticated and cosmopolitan Mary would have opened up a new world of artistic possibilities for Bess, the simple country woman of no education. However, this is to underestimate Bess's existing knowledge of court culture before Mary's arrival in 1569. It is clear that the surviving needlework from the period of Mary's stay shows a greater reliance on French books as sources of designs than on the Flemish books and prints which predominated at other times but this is merely a variation in the repertoire, not necessarily a new style of performance. Mary's presence did mean, however, that Talbot and Bess had to supply surroundings of suitable royal state and effectively their own homes contained a royal court in miniature.⁶⁸ This, and the need to provide suitable accommodation for visitors to the Queen, must have been as great an influence on Bess's conception of suitable aristocratic furnishings as any individual designs or conceits to which the captive Queen introduced her. If Chatsworth in the 1570s was magnificent, it was so because it contained a queen in exile and had to reflect the status of an aristocrat deemed worthy to guard her. Hardwick was the eventual inheritor not only of individual pieces of furnishing from this period at Chatsworth but also of Bess's sense of what was appropriate.

⁶⁷ For example, Swain, *The Needlework of Mary Queen of Scots*, pp. 63-85.

⁶⁸ These are described in John Guy, *'My Heart is my Own': The Life of Mary Queen of Scots* (London and New York: Fourth Estate, 2004), pp. 443-5.

By the 1590s, when Hardwick was being built and furnished, Bess had access to considerable resources and had had the opportunity to be influenced by court taste for nearly fifty years. It remains finally to consider what light the furnishings and decoration throw onto Bess's motivation for building Hardwick New Hall and for the messages she wished to present to the world.

The house itself is not a particularly large building compared, for example, with the great courtier houses such as Longleat, Holdenby or Theobalds. Bess could have had no expectation of having to accommodate a royal progress by the ageing Queen Elizabeth and did not, therefore, risk her finances by building on so lavish a scale. However, within the building the organisation of space reflected the social hierarchies which structured late Elizabethan society and affirmed Bess's place in it. The choice of Smythson as architect suggests a desire to be modern but to stay with the favoured architect of her own immediate circle. The furnishings display the same concern to be luxurious without being ostentatious or financially extravagant. Despite her great wealth, Bess did not spend a large amount on them, re-using old items where possible and spending prudently where new purchases were necessary. It is therefore unsurprising that her use of furnishings sometimes seems old-fashioned. Her major influences were those of the 1570s, on a foundation which may have dated right back to the middle of the century and her days as Lady Cavendish. All these factors suggest that Bess might have wished Hardwick, like her funeral, to 'be not ouer sumptuous or otherwise perfourmed with twoe muche vayne and idle chardge requyring only that [it] be accomplished in decent and convenient order fit for that estate and Degree wherunto yt hath pleased my most mercifull god to preferre me'.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ PRO, PROB 11/111, fol. 188; cf. Appendix Four.

It is in the consideration of the iconographic messages that Bess's more interesting motivation is revealed. Bess repeatedly seeks to celebrate her monarch, Queen Elizabeth, and, in complement to that, her own loyalty and duty. There is nothing in the decoration of the Hall or in the organisation of space within it to suggest that Bess intended to build a palace suitable for a future queen, Arbella Stuart. Apart from two depictions of the arms of Arbella's parents there is no reference to her whatsoever. Nor is there much to support the more frequent assertion that Hardwick was built as the house for a new dynasty, the Cavendish dynasty. The decorative heraldry refers almost exclusively to the Hardwick family, to Bess and her ancestors, not to Bess and her descendants. Like Arbella, William Cavendish, the favoured second son and designated heir to Hardwick, is barely acknowledged. It is Bess's initials which crown the building, Bess's coronet and Bess's family arms. Hardwick was not created to be the house of a dynasty or of a queen, it was created to be the monument of one woman, who demanded its immutability by the legal, religious and moral strictures of her will. The nature of the furnishings and decoration of Hardwick Hall was suitable to Bess's estate and their purpose was to proclaim that estate and Bess's own achievements forever. However, whilst seeking this immortality, Bess was not forgetful of worldly caution: she 'wolde not have any superfluite or waste of any thyng', preferring 'that whyche ys nedefoulle and nesesary'.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Folger, MSS X.d.428 (82). Letter from Bess to her steward at Chatsworth, 1552.

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